GANDHI AND AUROBINDO

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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FOREWORD

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee is qualified, by experience as well as by temperament, to interpret correctly the deeper aspects of the non-co-operation movement, which makes such a powerful appeal to ardent young minds. The moral and spiritual purpose of a large political phenomenon is not always apparent even to those actively engaged in it ; and its precise bearing on contemporary affairs can only be a matter of conjecture to the wisest observer. Mr. Chatterjee brings to his task great gifts of observation and judgment, of insight and feeling, while his style, marked throughout by vigour and distinction, glows here and there with that earnest and throbbing eloquence for which the Bengalee is noted among the sons of India. What pleases me in this pamphlet even more than these high qualities is the spirit of true reverence in handling great names, which knows how to sift and weigh the essence of their teaching without familiarity or flippancy.

It is a striking parallel between 1905 and 1920 which might have struck many students of Indian politics, but which receives luminous exposition for the first time in these pages of Mr. Chatterjee. Briefly stated, his thesis is that, under the inspiration of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose a movement of passive resistance grew up in Bengal in the earlier period, that in essentials it was similar to the present non-

violent non-co-operation of Mr. Gandhi, that it gave place in a short time to a regular revolutionary movement under the auspices of the *Yugantar*, that this latter movement came to grief almost inevitably, that the failure of the present non-co-operation movement, already becoming visible, must be followed by an attempt at revolution of the familiar type, and that the only way of averting the calamity is to accept the almost prophetic doctrine of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, *viz.*, the use of partial *Swaraj* as a step and means towards complete *Swaraj*. To many, as to me, the enunciation of this doctrine by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose at that time must have been hitherto unknown. But what is equally unknown and perhaps far more significant ,is the fact that the youngmen who have gone through the fires of revolution recognise in the provisions of the Reform Act of last year the partial *Swaraj* which may, if we are wise, become the step and means towards complete *Swaraj*, and that they refuse to have anything to do with Mr. Gandhi's new propaganda. These youngmen, some free, others still to become free, may not be accepted in some quarters as final authority, but no one can doubt that they have dreamed and dared.

To study history in the lives of great personages is as profitable as it is interesting, and Mr. Chatterjee will catch a wide public by the form in which he has set his thoughts. Some readers, however, may be repelled by a treatment of great events as though they could lend themselves to a study in contrast.

between two individuals, however eminent. To such I would say that, so far as I can judge, there is in these pages no exaggeration, no distortion, no sort of violence done to truth for the sake of effect. It is rare insight which enables the writer to frame this generalisation: "To my mind Gandhi stands as the high-priest of renunciation, Aurobindo of life". But I commend the pamphlet to all students of Indian politics not only for its trustworthy rendering of current facts but also for the wise guidance it gives for the future.

V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

The weather prophet and the political prophet have always been at a discount. In these pages however we present the reading public with a series of prophesies made by Mr. Chatterjee at the beginning of the Non-co-operation movement which have one after another turned out to be correct. The writer was, no doubt, at some advantage in dealing with the problems at issue in that as an intimate co-laborator of Aurobindo Ghose he had been through a political movement in Bengal, of which the Non-co-operation movement was more or less a repetition on an all-India scale.

India once again stands at the cross-roads and is asking herself seriously 'Responsive Co-operation or further Non-co-operation?' The thoughts contained in these pages may prove of some help to doubters on the way, containing as they do, the story of the genesis and growth of Aurobindo Ghose's great doctrine of '*Partial Swaraj as a step and means to Complete Swaraj*.'

We would add another word about the author. As Lord Ronaldshay points out in his '*Heart of Aryavarta*,' Mr. Chatterjee came into close personal touch with numbers of young men who were in the Revolutionary movement of the last decade. As counsel for the defence he became the repository of the confidences no less than of the hopes of the young insurgents whom he represented in Bengal and the United Provinces ; and he has thus been able to present to his countrymen an accurate analysis of the psychology behind that movement. Light has been thrown on several dark corners of a phase of contemporary history in which, we are persuaded our countrymen are generally interested.

December, 1925.

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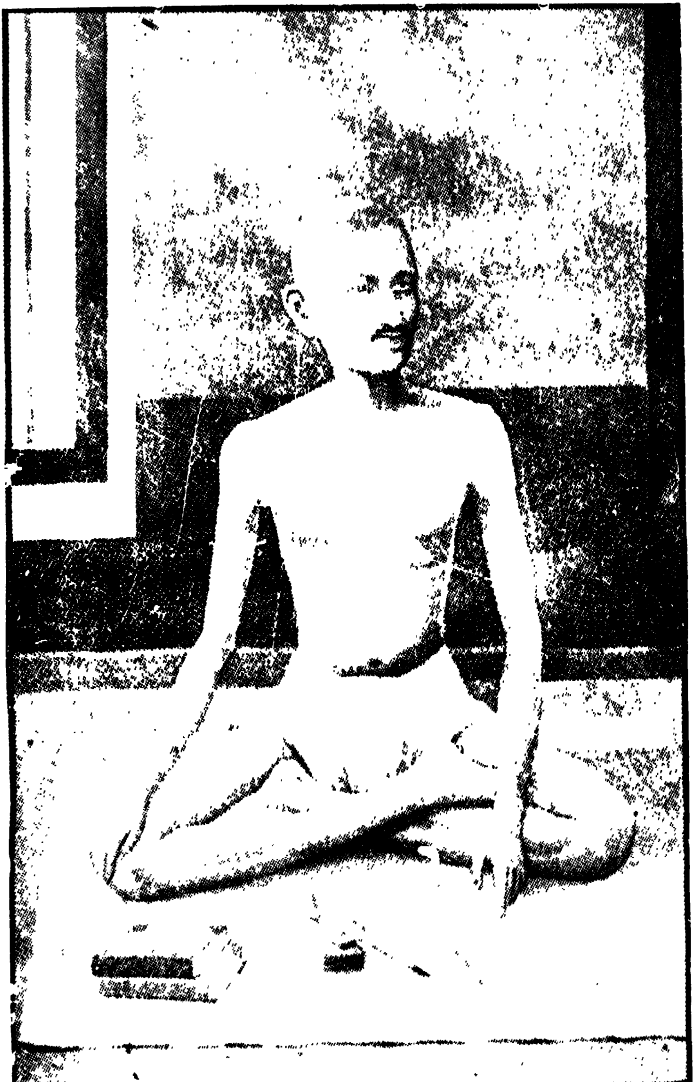
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GANDHI AND AUROBINDO



GANDHI OR AUROBINDO?

Friends and opponents are alike surprised at my signing a manifesto along with Sir A. Chaudhuri, and Messrs. J. N. Roy and J. Chaudhuri ; and it is being accounted to me for the deadliest of sins that I should have myself drafted this heretical declaration. Criticism of this description makes one almost fear that the average Bengalee has begun to forget the history of the last 15 years, the most pregnant and promising period in Bengalee life since the Battle of Plassey. But before coming to the consideration of this aspect of modern politics, I should like to state clearly the one issue we have put before the country in the manifesto, which is, "Gandhi or Aurobindo?". Speaking for myself, I have no hesitation in avowing my faith in the latter as against the former. But since

personal feeling is no matter to the public, I would seriously request them to examine into the philosophical and ethical outlook of the two men, and earnestly ask themselves which of the two would be the best guide of our political growth and development. These two men are the outstanding personalities in the India of to-day ; Gandhi standing on the crest of the wave of an India-wide feeling, Aurobindo in his loneliness, striding like a giant in the world of the spirit, and sending out deep currents of thought which are keeping the best of Young India astir and aflame with aspiration. To my mind Gandhi stands as the high-priest of renunciation, Aurobindo of life ; and as far as it is given to men of humbler clay like ourselves to understand things in the light of history and experience, Gandhi appears by very reason of his renunciatory creed to be marked out as the custodian of his countrymen's religious, as distinguished from political, concerns. One can of course imagine, by way of an answer, a good deal of cheap eloquence being expended on the theme of religion and politics being one. But those who think will no doubt realise that the distinction I am making goes far deeper, and is fundamental. Put in the baldest way, religion has to do with man's relation to God, politics with his relation to man ; one has to do with the relationship between imperfection and Perfection, the other with that between imperfection and imperfection. The importation of the method and the spirit proper to the one into the other has spelt

disaster in the world's history, and in particular, in Indian history. With the drama of the whole world-process now unfolded before us, we should be guilty of nothing short of criminal folly if we did not think honestly and deeply before placing ourselves unreservedly under the banner hoisted by Gandhi. It is his philosophy of life that must necessarily determine the character and the orientation of his political activities, and is it such a one as will lead the country to triumph, or will it lead it to defeat? Let us be honest enough and men enough to face this question. From all that one learns of Gandhi from those who ought to know, one realises that he belongs to the real *Sanyasi* type, who would scourge the flesh, turn deliberately back from the colour and warmth of life, deny himself all but the barest of sustenance, and hasten the dissolution of the body that the spirit it imprisons may the sooner re-enter into its divinity. It has been the mission of India to keep producing men of this type since the very beginning of her days, the type that has held the heart of her in thrall, and kept her face eternally turned Godward. And in a culminating period of her history, in a mood of great exaltation, she did surrender herself, body and soul, to the creed of her greatest Apostle of renunciation, owning Him her Lord and Master. She embraced Buddhism with a whole heart, bringing it right down into the secularity of her every-day life. In fact very little of the secular remained in her life. She put herself into sackcloth and ashes, beggared herself of

all she had, turned her children into monks and nuns, in a passionate aspiration to plant the spirit of other-worldliness into this world. And so she went on with the sword flung aside, the flesh mortified, and life reduced to its minimum of vitality, until Islam overtook her with the flaming sword, smiting her on one cheek, and then on the other which she turned to the smiter in the true manner of the believer in non-violence. I have no answer to make to those who would maintain that in this very humiliation she achieved the crowning glory of her history, even as the crucifixion of the Christ was the crowning glory of His manifestation on earth. But Mr. Gandhi who promises us *Swaraj* is patently not one of them. Looking back one sees in the foreign conquest of India the terrible revenge exacted of her by life for deserting life. In unclothing her soul before God Who is absolutely good, India made the supreme mistake of stripping herself bare before mankind which is an amalgam of evil and good. She forgot the great warning of the *Geeta* that the quest of good entails the necessity of being armed to the teeth against evil, even to the point of unhesitatingly taking the life of the evildoer at the moment that evil threatens to overwhelm good. In adopting the creed of absolute non-violence she had lost hold of her real self, for how else could she have ceased to remember the clear saying of Shree Krishna that not only is there evil in life, but that in spite of the destruction of evil-doers at a particular point of time, evil

is bound to recur as mankind grows, and that He shall therefore manifest Himself down the ages to help His servants smite the doers of evil whenever it succeeds in bringing the race to a dead halt in its progress Godward. He had bidden India to live in righteousness, and be ever ready to defend it against its enemies unto death, showing up, incidentally, the civilised man's dislike of taking life as the merest illusion, since life can neither slay nor be slain. In the eagerness to bring the heaven down to the earth she sinned at an unlucky hour against the great injunction, and has paid for it ever since with political subjection as the wages of her sin. During the awful night of time that has elapsed she has not lived, but merely existed, under the thick crust of formulas and practices with which she covered herself from the commencement of her political enslavement, to preserve her distinctiveness from the conquerors of her outer life. Only since the beginning of the present century has she evinced something like a determination to break through the crust, link herself back to the point in her history at which the light went out of her, and carry on the continuous tale of her civilisation. We have witnessed a marvellous bursting into flower of India's art, music, poetry and science. The spirit of research after self-knowledge has grown urgent ; a new protestantism is abroad against wrong, a new chivalry protects woman on her pilgrimage ; missions have been springing up to lessen suffering and pain ; institutions of national culture are being

founded ; the deep call of brotherhood from the submerged classes has been awakening a response in the conscience of the twiceborn. And finally, Great Britain has recognised India's right to self-determination, and put it into a new Parliamentary Charter with the United States, France, Italy and the Dominions as its attesting witnesses who have all admitted India on the League of Nations as a foundation member. All this has happened within the space of 15 years.

Now the whole question before the country is, is the transformation of India's political status from a condition of vassalage into that of admitted partnership with Great Britain, coupled with her entry into the comity of free nations, illusory or real? Is she to accept the proferred partnership with England or to turn her back deliberately on it? It is hardly any use arguing with the College Square exponents of political views who would condemn all efforts at construction which fell short of the ideal they had set up for themselves. Had they been born in France or England, these men would have been the loudest in crying shame on their Government for having comcluded peace with Germany before the conquering French and English armies had marched to Berlin, although during the active progress of the War they might have been all the time amongst the conscientious objectors. Men of this stamp are bound to talk themselves into ridicule in the natural course of time, and no one need fear serious consequences from

their campaign of words. But tragedy stalks India once again at the critical hour of her re-awakening in the garb of a *Sanyasi*. For such Mr. Gandhi is, and the country must recognise the fact before accepting him as its political leader. I yield to none in my respect for him. He is not only a great man, but a great hero, who would die like Socrates or Jesus for the faith in him. But he is supremely unpractical, and unfortunately there is no room in politics for the unpractical. The mission of the political worker is to translate an idea or an ideal given to the world, say, by a man like Gandhi, into reality, and he has therefore to take count of three different sets of facts: facts of history and of science, so that the action he contemplates may conform to the ascertained truths of human and external nature; and lastly the facts of the situation that faces him, so that the step he is about to take may not exceed or fall short of them. Men of the Gandhi type who have always made much of their faith, and little of the facts surrounding them, have done well as the world's teachers but woefully as the world's doers. This is a commonplace of history and need hardly be elaborated. The only figure I know of in the world's record wherein the teacher and the doer harmonised in a perfect balance of combination is that of Shree Krishna, the ideal philosopher-prince, of whom Plato dreamed, and whom India alone has had the immortal distinction of giving birth to. Whilst history has yet to repeat its Shree Krishna, life in the mean-

time has gone on throwing up its two types in separation, as teachers and doers. (And God save the country that accepts the one type for the other!). The mystery of this discretive tendency in nature lies in the unplumbed depths of life and evolution, but the facts are there right enough. In the word "doer" I include the statesman as well as the soldier who are both close students of facts and men of action, in their respective spheres, both grappling with the task of translating an idea into reality, and equally holding themselves back from taking action when the facts do not warrant it. I maintain Gandhi belongs to the Indian type of teachers at whose head stands Gautama Buddha, the type that (as I have said) draws India irresistibly to itself, the immense pull Gandhi is exerting on her being the last instance in point. But will she once more forget the great warning of her greatest Son in the *Geeta* and surrender not only her soul but her body, too, to the keeping of a *Sanyasi* whose creed of non-violent non-co-operation may appeal to her heart, but delights the Devil more than ever, since it would give him the chance to drag her once again back into the black night of agony and shame out of which she has painfully emerged? Let her attend to Gandhi's ministrations for the uplifting of her soul, but would that God would vouchsafe her the inspiration to put her life in the care of those of her sons who realise evil to be the most persistent and recurrent fact of life, and would prepare her like a crusader against it for all time.

I am not unaware that Mr. Gandhi has more than once repudiated "the accusation of being a saint". I have been calling him one in no spirit of accusation, but in that of deep reverence. I should however be doing violence to my humble understanding of history and life to call him a statesman. Something more than godliness, transparent rectitude of purpose, absolute want of fear, and an overwhelming sincerity of conviction, goes to the making of statesmanship. It connotes, as I have intimated, a vigilant and open-eyed appreciation of facts, of which Mr. Gandhi, I must say with the greatest respect for him, has failed to prove himself capable. That his declaration of *Satyagraha* was based upon an incomplete awareness of facts stands proved on his own admission, and I do not wish to commit the discourtesy of more than once reminding him of it. The movement of non-co-operation which he has now inaugurated is about as much out of touch with reality as the Teutonic dream of world-conquest. Mr. Gandhi and the Congress would vanish like a dream the moment a particular number of his countrymen in the shape of sepoys ceased to co-operate with their British officers in threatening constant, and offering frequent, violence to the unregenerate and most unsaintly sons of the frontier fastnesses, and the untold hordes in the region beyond them, who are as avid as ever of Indian gold and Indian blood. Is it not a trifle inconsistent to vow non-co-operation with the British Government even to the point of non-

payment of taxes, when you depend for your very existence on the active and unremitting co-operation of Indian and British on India's frontier? One would much like to know if the "gentlemen" who cried shame on Mrs. Besant and yelled at her in the most truculent manner would have the Indian soldiers on the frontier non-co-operate with the British Government, or would make an exception in their instance. One would expect an answer in favour of the latter alternative, if one may judge from the fact that the community which supplied Mr. Gandhi's Bengal majority at the Special Congress had presented the spectacle in the earlier stages of the War of melting away in a body from Calcutta on the rumour getting afloat in the Bazar that the Emden had managed to slip up the Hooghly and was making for the City of Palaces. Is Mr. Gandhi aware of this little incident? If the reply, however, is that the sepoys on the frontier must non-co-operate like the rest of their countrymen, what is the prospect Mr. Gandhi has to offer his country? One probable alternative is that Great Britain would send a sufficient number of her own "Tommies" to keep the frontier safe, in which case the cost of their maintenance would be charged to the Indian revenues; and in the event of Mr. Gandhi having succeeded in stopping the payment of taxes, Martial Law would be the inevitable sequel, and we should once more be watching the aeroplanes dropping bombs and the Dyers of the British Army practising musketry on India's unarmed

populace until they began paying taxes. Would it help the cause of *Swaraj* to bring on a repetition of Martial Law, and generate a fresh wave of unavailing anger against the British? India is unarmed, and therefore helpless against Martial Law, and how shall a second Jalianwallabagh alter the situation? It might be answered that repeated suffering may at last rouse the people to procure arms and ammunition for themselves and raise the standard of rebellion, and go on until the British are driven out of the country. But it is next to impossible for the people of India to import arms or ammunition in sufficient quantity for the purpose, for the proverbial watchdogs of the British Navy are as alert as ever, and were able even during the pre-occupation of the European war to prevent the ships loaded with arms and destined for insurgent Young India getting any nearer India than Java, off which Island the British Navy pounced on them, and in whose harbour it interned them. I have wondered if Mr. Gandhi has had time to acquaint himself with facts like the above. I am all but sure that most of his followers have never heard of such an incident. If the British Navy could have stopped India importing arms while her opportunities for doing so were at their best, what are the prospects of a similar attempt now or in future?

The further suggestion may emanate from some of Mr. Gandhi's followers that in the event of the Indian soldiers taking to non-co-operation, the Islamic

powers of Asia would pour into India through the passes of the North West and expel Great Britain from the sacred soil of *Aryavarta*. Ah! but is there the least desire in the heart of India for a catastrophe of such magnitude or of such evil portent? She has been a thousand years under Islam, and 150 years under Britain; and none but the wilfully blind can deny the patent, the grossly palpable, reality that India has progressed infinitely more in the 150 years than she did in the precedent millennium. Even in the limited sphere of politics the highest liberalism of Akbar has not only been realised in the appointment of Indians on the India Council and the Executive Councils and of Lord Sinha to the headship of a province, but far exceeded in the recognition by Great Britain of India's title to self-determination. One expects the instant retort that Akbar gave India the highest he had to give in his days when freedom had not been born, and that had India continued under Islam to the present times, her Islamic Emperor would have given her no less a charter than the new Government of India Act. But the point to remember is, Islam has hardly moved forward politically since the days of Akbar. In none of the Islamic countries stretching westward from Peshwar to the border-line of Europe has there been any sign of the growth of the ideal of liberty, equality, fraternity which has embeded itself in the life-substance of Europe; and how could Islam have given India something it never had to give? India

shall not re-enter the political embrace of Islam. Can any Indian worth the name bear to think of an India in which liberty, equality and fraternity were no longer things to believe in, and hold to? I am certain Mr. Gandhi cannot. And I am also sure that if by some stroke of ill-luck it were rendered possible for Islam to re-invade British India, the whole of India, Hindu and Muhamadan, would be fighting on the side of the British in less than six months' time.

If then we are to rule out the idea of rebellion, as also that of an Islamic re-occupation of the country, where will non-violent non-co-operation lead us to, except to Martial Law and all its attendant horrors, should the movement be anything like successful in threatening to paralyse the machinery of Government in its civil or military administration? Englishmen are not angels, and will not turn Buddhists in response to the spirituality underlying the doctrine of non-violent non-co-operation. The superlatively idealistic strain of the *Sanyasi* in Gandhi emerges just at this point. The whole presupposition of his movement is that the British are an inhuman people, as proved by Jalianwallabagh, and that we must accordingly cease to consort or co-operate with them. And then says Mr. Gandhi to the Congress that India will have Swaraj within a year if she will take to non-violent non-co-operation. How pray? Will the British undergo a moral transformation by some magical process of metamorphosis, the moment the Congress assures Mr. Gandhi

of its determination to non-co-operate non-violently? Where is the guarantee that the British will not put down Mr. Gandhi's non-violence with violence, as they did with the people in Jalianwallabagh? To begin with the proposition that the British have no humanity, and end with the promise to his countrymen of *Swaraj* within a year on the basis of non-violent non-co-operation, is really a performance that staggers one's reason. Does Mr. Gandhi not realise that the tacit assumption underlying his promise of *Swaraj* within the year is that the British are so over-civilised, humane and conscientious that their Government would not any way interfere with Mr. Gandhi's movement as long as it remained non-violent? Either he is inspired by this faith in the excessive humanity of the British people, or his assurance of *Swaraj* within twelve months is mere—well, a mere bit of *Gandhism.* One could have understood his warning the Congress against violence on the ground of soul-force, of the eternal sinfulness of violence as an expression of human conduct, and from such a standpoint insisting on his countrymen opposing non-violence to violence unto death. But he certainly did not enjoin non-violence on the Congress from this point of view ; he very well could not, for the promise of *Swaraj within a twelve-month* would have sounded a trifle unreal in that event, and even the Congress might have dissolved in laughter. We have it on the highest, that is, Mr. Gandhi's own, authority that he never means one thing and says

another, and we must accordingly conclude that he was sincere in his offer of *Swaraj* to his countrymen within the aforesaid time-limit conditionally on their accepting his programme of non-violent non-co-operation. We are therefore driven back to the only possible conclusion that Mr. Gandhi really has enough faith in the British character to believe that the British Government will remain mere passive lookers-on of his non-violent non-co-operative activities, even to the point of seeing him bring them to an absolute halt by means of persuading all India's soldiers and civilians to boycott them. If Mr. Gandhi actually thinks so well of the British, then should he not adhere to his Amritsar attitude of offering co-operation to them on the common ground of the "Reforms," treating Dyer and his like as individual aberrations from the real British type? If in spite of his non-co-operation, the British would allow him peacefully to achieve *Swaraj* within 12 months, they ought to let him have it within 6 months in the event of his co-operating with them!

But let us suppose the miracle to have happened, the British Government to have broken down through the coercion of non-violent non-co-operation, and the British soldier and official and merchant to have left the country. The Indian sepoys will of course have given up fighting long prior to this consummation, as indeed the very pre-condition thereof, and no Indians will have been trained as officers either for the same reason. May I respectfully inquire of

Mr. Gandhi how he would in these circumstances prevent an invasion of India through the North-West? I should not be surprised at the reply that Messrs. Mohommed Ali and Saukat Ali can be relied on to see that the followers of Islam do not invade India, but on the contrary, help her to develop on the lines of Hindu-Muhamadan amity; although I should much like to see the Congress voting singly on this point. But even so, how would Mr. Gandhi prevent the Japanese effecting a landing on India's wide, wide and defenceless sea-board? I would earnestly implore and plead with Mr. Gandhi never to lose sight of the fact, for all his pre-occupation with non-co-operation, that India is in a state of utter dependence on Great Britain for her defence against external aggression, and that any scheme for her political emancipation which leaves this awful fact out of account is hardly worth serious consideration. And one has to say with deep regret that Mr. Gandhi has given no intimation to the country of whether he has taken cognisance of this fact at all, and if so, how, in framing his scheme of *Swaraj* within the year. It has fallen to my lot to have had to do a good deal, as counsel, with the Indian youths who had seriously dreamed the dream of making India free; and the one outstanding fact that has burned itself into my consciousness in course of my dealings with these young men for over a decade, is this "awful fact," as I have termed it, of India's absolute unpreparedness and inability to defend herself of her

own strength. I shall not digress into a discussion of whether it is our or England's fault that we have continued in this state of helplessness ever since the British occupation, but feel constrained to mention the fact, nevertheless, that no President of the Congress excepting Lord Sinha has discussed the tremendous issues arising out of this situation with anything like the seriousness it merits. But for my present purposes it is sufficient to say that whatever the reason, and whosesoever the fault, the fact of our utter helplessness is there, and it is incumbent upon every Indian statesman to satisfy his countrymen plainly and unequivocally that he has adequately foreseen and provided for it in the scheme of reconstruction or regeneration he has to put before them. It will probably be urged that there is no reason to think that the Japanese would come and take possession of India, were the British to leave it. But in view of the current morality, national and international, one would be more than loth to rely upon the hypothesis of the Japanese people being likely to develop an extraordinary ethical idealism on the departure of the British from India. And I venture to think, further, that India is unanimous in not wishing for a mere change of masters. The paralysing circumstance thus stares us in the face that even on the supposition of miracles happening, that is to say, the British bowing themselves out of India at the threat of successful non-violent non-co-operation, and the two Ali brothers keeping back the

miscellaneous gentry of western Asia from entering our country, Mr. Gandhi cannot assure us that she would not be merely shifting her yoke from one shoulder to the other where it might gall even more unbearably. And as regards the two miracles I have formulated to myself by stretching my faith in the dogma of non-co-operation to the breaking point, simply because it has been laid down by a son of India whose sincerity is as a shining sword, may I appeal to Mr. Gandhi to say if he believes in either of them?

I have endeavoured to examine Mr. Gandhi's particular promise of *Swaraj* from every possible standpoint (not necessarily contemplated by him), only to be driven back by the cold steel of facts into the unavoidable conclusion that it is impossible of realisation. The further question therefore irresistibly arises, why is Mr. Gandhi then urging an impossibility on his countrymen? One possible answer is that he has given Islam in India a political programme which is calculated to hold even the most estranged section of it back from the violence which would otherwise take place, and thereby endanger the country's progress. Should there be any such section amongst our Muhamadan countrymen, how long could Mr. Gandhi expect to control them, for they must be discovering for themselves that the prospect of non-co-operation leading to a revision of the Turkish Treaty is fast ceasing to be even a pious hope? It is difficult to credit the theory of

Mr. Gandhi deliberately convulsing the political mind of India from one end to another for the sake of a mere temporary advantage. The alternative suggestion of some of his admirers is that he is taking advantage of the present situation to knit the Hindu and the Muhamadan together into the unity of a common purpose and a common endeavour by holding up before them the ideal of non-co-operation. No Hindu worth the name but sympathises with his Muhamadan brethren in their hour of sorrow over the vanishing temporal greatness of the Caliphate which had once held the gorgeous West in fee. But I am bound to insist on the truth, unceasingly inculcated by Aurobindo Ghose, that nothing enduring can be built up on a fiction. The attempt to re-instate the Caliph in his pre-war status by threatening non-co-operation to the Government of India is a fictitious one ; the further attempt to win over Muhamadan feeling on the basis of a movement foredoomed to failure is equally fictitious. But let us look a little deeper, and ask Mr. Gandhi what is it for which he is calling upon his Hindu brethren to sacrifice their all. Is it for the purpose of achieving that Hindu-Muhamadan Indian nationalism of which Indian statesmen have so long dreamed, or is it not for something far other, although he does not appear to have given his thought to it? Let us follow this movement to its projected destination, which is, restoration to Turkey of her temporal powers. How does that

lead to Hindu-Muhamadan unity in India? Does it not merely rehabilitate the Indian Muhamadan in his old extra-territorial devotion to Turkey's temporal interests, and perhaps make him a little grateful, by the way, to the Hindu for the help the latter has rendered him in re-enthroning the Sultan as the Suzerain of the part of heaven and earth which holds the followers of the Prophet? But how is he thereby in any the least degree magnetised towards India as his mother no less than the Hindu's? We have yet to hear the Muhamadan collaborators of Mr. Gandhi call out to India as their mother, like their Hindu brethren, with the deep note of passion plucking the soul out of every fibre of their being. Mr. Gandhi all the same would have his motherland bleed, not that she may thus be enabled to gather her Muhamadan children to her bosom as the comrades and the brothers of her Hindu children, but that she may wash with her blood their tear-dimmed eyes to afford them once more the clear vision of "Room," not only as their high-priestess, their spiritual head and sovereign, but also as the mistress of their heart, "the fair fortress and fostress" of all their feeling, aspiration and allegiance.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I deeply venerate the religious devotion of our Muhamadan brethren to the Caliphate, and if I were one of them, I would cleave to it with all the strength of my soul. But can they in reason ask the Hindus to declare

civil war against Great Britain to gain Turkey back her lost kingdom? India herself is so much like the disrobed queen of Asia to-day,—with her vitality at its lowest ebb which it will take generations of high endeavour to pull back into the flood-tide of the world's free life—that she would be merely providing material for a Cervantes of future history if she were to persuade herself into the errantry of donning the exceedingly rendible Gandhi-made saffron robe of non-co-operation, and challenge Europe to try conclusions with her over the terms of the Turkish Treaty. Even the remnant of Turkey would be laughing at her. (I write the above in the deepest sorrow, for I would that my country were the avenger of the world's wrongs as of old. Oh! for an Arjuna now instead of Gandhi). The issue that Mr. Gandhi has raised unwittingly, no doubt, is Britain or Turkey, and not Britain or the brotherhood of Muhamadan India, for as we have seen the objective of the movement is the service of Turkey, and not the conversion of the Islamic sojourner in India into the son of her bosom. To such a movement India can make but one answer, that of an emphatic and unambiguous refusal to participate in it. And I would respectfully warn Mr. Gandhi of the further fact that the number of Muhamadans in India is not inconsiderable who are firmly opposed to the Congress propaganda of non-co-operation in the cause of Khilafat.

The only other suggestion that I have under-

stood Mr. Gandhi's followers to make in elucidation of his creed of non-violent non-co-operation is that he is trying by means of it to rescue India from the degradation of acquiescing in foreign domination, that he is trying to light up in her heart that fire of divine discontent which shall keep her perennially restless until she has *Swaraj*, never mind by what particular device she is actually to attain it, since that is hidden just now in the womb of the future. It were a poor compliment after all to the genius and the patriotism of Mr. Gandhi to suggest that he has deliberately started his country on the pilgrimage to *Swaraj* without a clear prevision in his own mind of the path along which she is to travel to that temple of realisation. It is just in regard to this very matter that I have an appeal to make to Mr. Gandhi. He is addressing himself not to the reason of India, but to its emotion; he does not argue, but dictates. Apart from the limited number of intellectuals who have joined him, the following that he is creating does not stand together on the common ground of a reasoned conviction, but consists mainly of men and boys who believe in his word implicitly because they know him to be as good as his word. Many of his followers, Hindu and Muhamadan, who would not give the men of contrary views a hearing at the Congress, were heard to say that Gandhi was their God, and that they would allow none to come on the Congress platform to hamper God's work. It was not so long ago that we were laughing at Europe

over the way her different peoples were reducing God to the image of man by asking of Him the gift of victory in arms. Is not Mr. Gandhi unconsciously articulating the opposite tendency ingrained in the mass of his countrymen to deify man? The sight of our men and women bowing down to the feet of *sanyasis* as givers of salvation and workers of miracles is too obtrusive a fact of Indian life to need dwelling on at length. But this spirit of blind faith in the man-god is now migrating from the religious into the political life of the people with the advent of Gandhi therein. It is the commonplace of post-Congress experience to come upon groups of *Gandhi-ites* essaying different explanations of the non-co-operation movement,—their *Guru* having vouchsafed none,—but shutting their lips with a snap so soon as they scent the presence of an adversary who would argue with them in the merely human way, and turning on him the united answer that non-co-operation must be practised on the simple and sufficient ground that Mahatma Gandhi has promulgated it. Give us another saint like Gandhi, they challenge, in Indian politics, and then venture to argue against Mahatmaji. Any further attempt to reason or argue has the effect of throwing these non-violent gospellers into the amusing attitude of wanting to lay violent hands on the opposite party (pursuant to the conviction, one surmises, that Gandhiji has decreed non-violence only towards Government, which leaves his followers a free hand to deal with

political opponents in the way they like!). The attack led by the young hopefuls of non-Bengalee Calcutta on the Bengalee volunteers of the Congress was typical of the spirit animating the band of political neophytes who have come into the Congress under the inspiration of Mr. Gandhi's remarkable personality. It is in regard to them that I make my appeal to Mr. Gandhi. He does not himself approve of their method, as is well known, for has he not condemned it whenever it has come into evidence in public assemblies? But I asked him, in the country's as well as their own interest, to find a means of grounding them in first principles before encouraging them to take part in the deliberations of the Congress. Nobody is qualified to participate therein by merely paying in the delegation fee. He must surely know what the Congress stands for before he can profitably take part in its proceedings as one of its enfranchised members. I think I may say with the consent of all that the great object for which the Congress has so long laboured has been to establish an Indian democracy. The political method of democracy is, of course, Government by discussion, and Congressmen have aspired to instal such a Government in their country in place of the prevalent British overlordship in the faith that discussion is the best human method of eliciting truth, and that legislation undertaken by democracy has consequently a far greater chance of being founded in reality than that emanating from the single will of a monarch,

or *the joint will of an oligarchy.* Obviously, there can be no discussion of a question unless there be more than one party discussing it, and the exponents of the new creed of "Gandhi or *Lathi*" repudiate the very notion of democracy in attempting to burke discussion from any standpoint other than Mr. Gandhi's. It will be difficult for the Congress to hold together and go on much longer unless Mr. Gandhi can teach these gentlemen to submit to the democraatic discipline of respecting differences of opinion as the condition precedent to their initiation into politics. Either that, or we should be heading straight for a dictatorship based on obscurantism on the analogy of the feeling that determines our religious attitude of implicit reliance on *Sanyasis*.

To revert to the hypothesis of divine discontent. Nobody can seriously entertain the suggestion that Mr. Gandhi is inspired by no higher ideal than that of getting India's ship of State under weigh merely to set it drifting through the uncertain waters of discontent on the off-chance of its bumping up against the bank of *Swaraj* under continuously fine weather conditions. But at the same time the painful fact stares us straight in the face that he is betraying an increasing tendency to ignore the outstanding lesson of history that it repeats itself. The way Mr. Gandhi speaks of non-violent non-co-operation would induce one to imagine as if it were quite an unheard-of and untried experiment in the political history of modern India. The facts, of course, are

quite otherwise. Bengal began this identical movement fifteen years ago at the call of Aurobindo Ghose. And I affirm with all the earnestness which is in me that it is absolutely obligatory on Mr. Gandhi to acquaint himself intimately with the consequences which have issued from that movement before calling upon the country to take it up over again. It was not without reason that the Extremist leaders of Bengal and Maharashtra, and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya on behalf of the United Provinces, opposed Mr. Gandhi on the Calcutta Congress platform. The lessons of non-co-operation had burned into their brain, and they could not stultify their political experience of the last decade and a half by inviting their countrymen back into a movement which had had its trial, and spent itself after doing its uttermost for India. Mr. Gandhi, one feels compelled to point out, is out by 15 years in starting the non-co-operation propaganda a second time. Had he been here in 1905 or 1906, and thrown all the dynamic energy of his wonderful personality into the movement started by Bengal in the first instance, he would have been certain to carry it into the higher reaches of the national consciousness than it actually penetrated, and one has no doubt that India would have been the richer for his contribution to the cause of her uplift. But with all his infectious and vitalising enthusiasm he must realise none the less the futility of flogging a dead political horse. India is intent on the goal of *Swaraj*, and has made

up her mind to get to it by going her quickest pace. But she has left her first mile-post of non-co-operation far behind, and Mr. Gandhi can but ill serve her by putting her into a reminiscent mood, and making her go back for the mere pleasure of doing the journey over again in his company. As mere words may leave Mr. Gandhi unconvinced, I shall attempt to give him as short an account as possible of the Bengal movement, chiefly sponsored by Aurobindo Ghose, in the earnest hope that it may persuade him of the reality of what I am saying.

II

THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

AND

THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

THE BENGAL MOVEMENT

The agitation against the Partition marked a new era in Bengal. Her declaration of a boycott of British goods by way of a reply to the unrelenting refusal of the Bureaucracy to undo or modify their pet scheme of administrative division signalised her emancipation from the mendicant policy of India's nineteenth century politics. This escape from political mendicancy was the first expression, however, of a very much deeper renewal of Bengalee character. One sensed intuitively the descent of the Spirit on the Bengalee, one of those mystical visitations of divinity in man in the hour of his soul's flagging and failing, which have made human history worth recording. The purifying flood of a resurgent life came pouring into the province, cleansing the Bengalee,—the

hitherto sorry mimic of the European—body and soul, of the sham and the untruth which had so long overlain him. He stood before his countrymen in a halo of transfiguration. Immortal purpose shone in his eyes ; and the attributes that lie on the Godward side of humanity, and seemed to have all but deserted him, reappeared in his character—hope, courage, faith, aspiration, defiance of death. Life burst into flower in all its branches, the main stress of it going naturally into the new-felt longing for political freedom. "India shall be free," the Bengalee cried aloud with a sureness of accent unknown in British Indian history.

This first rapture of freedom broke out in songs which rose unbidden from a thousand lips, tens of thousands of lips, all over Bengal. They were mostly the composition of Tagore who poured into them all his wealth of spiritual vision, all the marvel of feeling and beauty, the blend of faith, hope and strength, which only he knows how to put together in words that burn the soul clear of dross, and lift it in aspiration. He called his fellowmen to the consecration of their uttermost manhood, to the sacrifice of life and of the things they prized higher than life, for the single purpose of redeeming the motherland from her shame and degradation.

The Bengalee developed character faster in a year than he had done in the whole sum of precedent decades. Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, Bengal's high-priest of constitutional agitation, tore himself

free of the Legislative Council, and became the apostle of the Boycott movement. Hardly a meeting took place without his great voice being heard administering the *Swadeshi vow*. And his comrades of the Congress stood by his side. His oratory had never possessed a finer timbre than it developed in the cause of the fight against the Partition. Simultaneously rose the immense voice of Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal who struck a new vein of appeal to his countrymen in the Bengali language. He rescued its prose from the setting of languid fiction, and fashioned out of it a resonant instrument which he made to thrill and vibrate to the most varied needs of expression. A sense of the physical presence of the glory that was India seemed to take possession of the vast audiences he addressed as they listened to his oratory flowing in a molten mass of reason and passion. And Bengal reacted to the song of her poet, and the call of her gifted spokesmen, with a sincerity and a high seriousness which will fill brilliant page in her history. Boycott became the reality of her life. Men and women discarded their British-made goods in all parts of the province, and made of them the bonfires which still live in Bengal's memory, and lit up her sky in those days like the flush of a new dawn. And when the Carlyle Circular threatened to stand between the student and the new spirit, Bengalee patriots founded the National Council of Education with a permanent annual income of Rs. 50,000 in an incredibly short time. And National

Schools were not slow to spring up in every District. Further, the *Swadeshi* impulse fructified in the starting of mills, banks, insurance concerns and other types of industrial enterprise which continued to flourish in the face of sniggering critics of the unbusiness-like Bengalee, and stand at the present day on the safest foundations. And synchronously with all the energetic endeavour on the part of the elders to make their country worthy of freedom, the youth of Bengal congregated in the innumerable *Samitis* which dotted the land all over to build up bodies that might fitly encase the souls of the free. Innumerable too were the young Bengalees who vowed before temple gates never to seek employment under Government. And above all this stir of life rose the sustaining, life-giving, blessed *mantra* of *Bande Mataram* which summed up in two words all that Bengal was daring and dreaming.

Aurobindo Ghose came to Bengal thus churned up into the fervour of freedom in the early part of 1906. There was a glamour of idealism about this son of Bengal. He had given up all—wealth, comfort, home, to be a mere servant of the Mother. Deeply grounded in the classical culture of Europe and India, conversant with the modern languages of both the continents, absolute master of the English language which he could make visibly to leap into life with a touch of his pen, Aurobindo came to his native province appropriately enough as Principal of the National Council of Education. But the audience



Aurobindo Ghose

he commanded in this capacity was too limited and too immature to quench the deep-seated longing in him to do his uttermost for India. He soon took up the *Bande Mataram* (which Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal had been temporarily editing) as being likely to provide him with a better means of reaching out with his mind to his countrymen at large ; and it achieved a large enough circulation in less than a month to become the fit instrument of his purpose.

[The present writer will always look back with his deepest yearning to the proud hour of his youth when he was chosen by Aurobindo as an associate in his work, and charged by him with the high responsibility of writing weekly two of *Bande Mataram's* leading articles, which the present writer had the honour of doing as long as the Nationalist organ lasted. He naturally came into close contact with Aurobindo as with a brother and teacher, a contact that did not cease, even after Aurobindo's arrest, for the greater part of the latter's detention in the Presidency Jail as an under-trial prisoner, where he was permitted the privilege of Aurobindo's company at least once a week through the kindness of the Jail Superintendent. It is in the belief that in these circumstances he was enabled to get a real glimpse of the spirit of Aurobindo Ghose that the present writer ventures on the task of restating below what he understood to be Aurobindo's view of life and its problems.]

Aurobindo took his stand before the country as

the apostle of life which he defined as God's opulence, as a great destiny awating consummation in Him. He who flees from life flees from God, and is the victim of self-deception. The fun of it is in the fight between matter and spirit which it holds in a fascinating amalgam, the fight being made the most interesting in man by reason of the concession to him of the freedom to sink deeper in matter, or to disentangle himself from the material matrix by rising along the line of his spirit's attraction towards God. But matter counter-attracts all the time with exceeding strength bcause of the underglow of beauty it derives from its very interpenetration by spirit. And the Law of Karma which lays on man the sum of consequences of his acts and omissions in the shape of destiny or character gives the fight he carries on its orientation, and makes his individuality. Death, of course, is a mere incident in the continuity of this interplay of spirit and matter. The fact of this struggle going on in man, and pulling him opposite ways to heaven and earth, had been keenly felt by philosophers (by Plato most vividly), but it was given to India's *Brahman* to find the key to the mystery of the struggle, and open out the path for the spirit to journey along to God, through regions of ever-widening wonders, of which poetry and music bring us far-off intimations. The re-discovery of the path and standing sentinel over it for all time is the mission of modern India, and the desire for it beginning to take shape in the

nation's mind constitutes the abiding significance of its present awakening.

But the renaissance of India's *Brahman* culture is to be with a difference. She must no more keep her great philosophy of God-knowledge locked up in her *Brahman* breasts. Her culture is no longer to signify an aristocratic research after God, exclusively appropriate to the *Brahman*, but must become a national Indian endeavour, as the expression of the genius of the whole of her people. She must take up the great task now of carrying her ideal of Brahmanhood to its highest fruition by realising it in the commonalty of her children. Let her merge her *Brahman* in her non-*Brahman*, even as Japan did with her *Samurai*, to rear up a new Brahmanhood upon the basis of desert, and not of descent. It shall cease to be of much moment to her from now whether an individual Indian has worked his way to emancipation or not, but it shall concern her deeply henceforward to see that her people are moving as a whole on the pathway of the spirit's fulfilment in God. This is to be her contribution to the problem of democracy.

So spoke Aurobindo to his countrymen who soon realised the intimate bearing of his message on their political activities. For India could only get to the goal he pointed out to her by becoming mistress of her own Government. The great mass of her children was steeped in ignorance, and of those educated by the Bureaucracy, the greater number

could look forward to no better destiny for their motherland than to deform herself from a temple of God into a vast suburb of European civilisation. The number was growing to be legion of the fools and Philistines—the monstrous products of a soulless education nourished on the rind of European thought —who were openly laughing at their country's past. (The splendid school of research organised by the Calcutta University had not come to existence in Aurobindo Ghose's time). India must either tear up by the roots the whole of the demoralising tendencies eating into the soul of her people, or be content to feel her new inspiration wilt and die in the stifling atmosphere of modern vulgarity. The task that confronted her was therefore no less than that of educating every one of her children, man and woman, into the renewed appreciation of the mission of their civilisation, and the intention of their race. And she was powerless to do so unless she had control of her purse. No amount of private charity could enable her to cope with even a fraction of her task. and it was the vainest of dreams to dream of the Bureaucracy either nationalising their system of education, or spending sufficient money thereon to carry it to every one of her children. The further fact of India's poverty stared every one in the face, and the thought cut into the mind like a sword that a people with no food in its stomach and no clothes to its back would have little time and less inclination to listen to the doctrine of equal Brahmanhood for

all. India must either get the power into her own hands to nationalise her education and build up her well-being, or resign herself to the fate of being reduced to a mere memory like Carthage or Babylon.

Great Britain showed little anxiety or inclination to transfer the control into Indian hands of either India's education or of her economic development, and Indians must consequently, said the *Bande Mataram,* either mend or end British rule. In an article entitled "The Vanity of Reaction" it appealed to the Bureaucracy not to spend themselves in the unavailing effort to dam the waters of nationalism which were divinely destined to flow into fulfilment, but to come to India's help by preparing the channel along which they might flow with the regulated ease of assured accomplishment. And for an answer it heard Lord Morley lay down the comforting dogma that "for as long as his imagination could travel into the future, for so long must India remain under the personal rule of the Englishman." The political ideal which remained for India to embrace after this was, Independence, which the *Bande Mataram* put before Indians as the ultimate goal of their patriotic efforts. (Does Mr. Gandhi recognise more than a family resemblance between the *Bande Mataram's* doctrine of independence and the one he is seeking to embody into the creed of the Congress?).

But Indians must not break the law, the *Bande Mataram* admonished them, in attempting to achieve independence. The fact was too patent to

be ignored by Aurobindo and his co-workers that the Bureaucracy were far too well organised, and the people far too disorganised, to make the result of a physical conflict between the two any other than a crushing defeat for the latter. The *Bande Mátaram* told them to develop the moral fitness for independence as the condition precedent to their achieving it. The way to do it was by self-help and passive resistance. Indians must develop their industries and agriculture with their own efforts instead of whimpering before the alien overlordship for aid, and as the latter denied them economic protection, they must protect their own goods voluntarily by practising *Swadeshi* and boycott (which were as the obverse and reverse of the same coin) ; they must build themselves strong and healthy bodies by strenuous voluntary efforts in their *Samitis* and *Akharas* ; they must themselves fight malaria out of their villages by clearing jungles, making roads, and cleaning tanks ; and the nation must also found as many centres of national education as possible, for it was in them alone that the light could be kept burning of that philosophy of self-realisation wherein lay the seeds of salvation. Such was to be the method of self-help. The programme of passive resistance included the eschewance of all Government titles and functions, of all honorary association with the Bureaucracy in the shape of membership of Legislative Councils, District Boards, and Munici-

palities, and of every form of employment under them paid or unpaid.

In going through the plan of work he put before them, his countrymen would acquire, thought Aurobindo, such lessons in self-reliance, manliness and discipline as might lift them in course of time to that higher level of effort and sacrifice which marks the life of the world's free peoples. And the thought knocked at the gates of the brain that after Indians had grown by their unaided efforts into the moral stature of the free, Great Britain would have no other alternative than to admit them into freedom, or forfeit her right in the eye of the civilised world to be in India. So thought Aurobindo in 1906, and 1907 ; and so thinks Gandhi to-day in seeming unawareness of the tide of momentous happenings which has swept through the interval of years that separates *Young India* from *Bande Mataram*, and embodies in its records more than a sufficient refutation of *Gandhism* of 1920 harking back to *Aurobindoism* of 1906—07. Much happened between 1907 and 1910 to lead Aurobindo to formulate his famous doctrine of *partial Swaraj* being the step and means towards *complete Swaraj* on the eve of his departure for Pondicherry. I would earnestly request Mr. Gandhi to read through the whole of the "Last will and Testament," and ask himself if its advocacy of *partial Swaraj* does not fit unerringly into the facts of the present situation.

But before going into the above question, I

would respectfully invite Mr. Gandhi's attention to the fact that Aurobindo delivered his message of self-help and passive resistance in an atmosphere of reality, whereas Mr. Gandhi's repetition of that message is falling upon emptiness. Bengal did actually boycott British goods, embark on industrial ventures, multiply centres of national education, keep her sons back from entering the Legislative Councils, and put her youth through strenuous physical training all the time that Aurobindo was urging her to such acts. And the spirit of nationalism the *Bande Mataram* created leaped out of Bengal into the Punjab and Maharastra. What has happened to Mr. Gandhi's programme? None of the men who overflowed with enthusiasm at the Congress for the boycott of foreign goods (embodied by Mr. Gandhi into the resolution he moved) have translated their enthusiasm into reality, and most of them never meant to. The great and small ones of the legal profession who shout themselves hoarse on occasions with *Gandhi Ji ki jai* do not betray the least anxiety (with the very few exceptions like Pundit Motilal Nehru) to give up their calling in pursuance of Mr. Gandhi's resolution. Some of them have been further treating the public to the edifying spectacle of standing, *Durbasa*-like, with the right arm outstretched for calling a curse on Government, and the left arm thrust behind with the palm open to receive the *Dakshina* of appeasement. None believe in non-co-operation. There could not have been such gross defection

otherwise in respect to two such important items on Mr. Gandhi's resolution. The uneducated, I mean, the politically non-educated, and by far the most numerous section of Mr. Gandhi's followers voted for the whole of his resolution on the simple ground that Mr. Gandhi asked them to do so, but have not developed enough morality to realise the fact yet that to vote for a resolution at the national assembly casts the obligation on the voter to carry it into practice. These gentlemen show a delectable spirit of hero-worship for Mr. Gandhi, no doubt, but the sooner they are made to grasp the fact that they really dishonour him in shouting 'yea' to his propositions and refusing to realise them in conduct, the better for the future of India and of themselves. The objection will be urged that Congressmen have in any event refrained from seeking election to the reformed Councils. But the greater number of them have done so not in response to Mr. Gandhi's formula of non-co-operation, but on the ground that in spite of their personal opinion against the boycotting of the Councils, the decision of the Congress must be respected, even though the majority which registered that decision consisted of delegates who were altogether innocent of either the purpose or the purport of the new Government of India Act. Those who have been through the earlier experience of 1905-07 cannot but be struck by the radical difference between the response evoked by the Nationalist call to passive resistance in those days, and that elicited

by Mr. Gandhi's summon to non-co-operation at the present day. I have little doubt that as time passes, Mr. Gandhi will find out for himself that he has got hold of the burst husk of a movement from which the soul has long fled.

There is also a class of educated Indians professing the Gandhi-creed who are growing .to be a public nuisance and a public danger. They are always ready with the interrogation for their fellow-men, "Are you a follower of Gandhi"? An answer in the negative brings down on the devoted head of its maker all the imprecations known to the lexicon of current politics; and should he remind these *Gandhi-ites* that the facts of their daily life constitute a repudiation of every one of Mr. Gandhi's injunctions, they are ready with the reply "Principle is everything, facts do not matter." Should the other party still have courage left to seek elucidation of the aphoristic wisdom packed into the above pronouncement, he would be informed that what the soul of India demands at the present moment is that all her sons should declare themselves in agreement with Mr. Gandhi's principles, although they may fail partly or altogether to conform to them; for, so long as the spirit is willing, it matters little that the flesh is weak. Nineteen hundred and twenty years ago three human figures were crucified by the Jews; one has come down the ages as the Saviour of Man, the other two as thieves. One imagines that the two latter persons could have rattled off the Ten Com-

mandments with the same ease with which their successors in modern India rattle off the articles of Gandhi's creed. Those two met with their desert; when will public opinion in India crucify these thieves of public morality?

I should be sure to be reminded that far from having fallen upon emptiness, Mr. Gandhi's message has sprouted into exultant life on the soil of India's youth. Ah! the youth of India with its heart beating heaven-high with aspiration, like all youth of promise, and possessed likewise of the secret of how to clasp death with the rapture of first love—yes, the youth of India could not but have been thrown into spiritual turmoil by the influence of Gandhi's personality. But I take the liberty of saying that he knows little of the qualities latent in the youth of his country, that he has but little conception of how the doctrine of independence lights up into conflagration the inner fires of its being. The study of India's youth is at present the deepest of all Indian studies, and had I the tongue of men and angels, I would passionately plead with Mr. Gandhi to form an adequate conception, for his own guidance, of its character and possibilities from a study of its immediate past manifestation, before calling upon it with all the driving energy of his eloquence to take up the task of achieving *Swaraj* by means of non-violent non-co-operation. Has Mr. Gandhi read of the Indian youth standing on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, scanning the horizon with anxious eyes, day

after day, for the sight of the ship coming with arms and ammunition (ignorant of the fact that the British had interned it in Java), being overtaken by the Police, and embracing death encased in three bullets? Has anybody told him of the boy betrayed by his Afgan comrade into the hands of British officers, being tried and condemned to death, and refusing the gift of life in the shape of a proffered commutation of the death-sentence, because life was unbearable whilst India was not free ; or of the other one gaining in weight after being sentenced to death, and sleeping as peacefully as ever on the morning that was to be his last? I have given Mr. Gandhi three stray instances out of many from an unwritten page of his country's history covering the period between 1908 and the publication of the Montague-Chelmsford Report. The serious problem before Indians and Britishers in India is how to train and guide all the energy of self-denial and reality of patriotism which is in the youth of the country into the channel of legitimate fulfilment. Should not Mr. Gandhi beware of speeding it back into a second revolutionary movement which can no more gain India independence than bombs and revolvers can silence field-pieces, and country boats overset the British Navy?

I do not wish to do Mr. Gandhi the injustice of suggesting that he is consciously driving Young India on to the highway of revolution. He has expressed his abhorrence of lawlessness and violence with his

characteristic directness and sincerity, and warned the public of his resolve to help Government against outbreaks of disorder in whatever shape or form they may occur. He dropped *Satyagraha* as soon as it led to violence ; he is sure to abandon *Swaraj by way of non-violent non-co-operation* as soon as it confronts him with the spectre of revolutionary violence. But should he lead his country into the futility of such an experience? I beg to remind him that history or human nature (whatever we may call it) has a way, all its own, of repeating itself under a similarity of provoking circumstances. How did the revolutionary movement spring to life in Bengal? The *Bande Mataram* had placed before the country the ideal of independence which naturally fell like a seed on the fertile mind of youth to germinate into a living reality of purpose. The youth of India which was listening to the *Bande Mataram* seriously, held to the law, to start with, in obedience to its injunctions against the infringement thereof. But when Great Britain plainly told India through the mouth of the accredited prophet of British Liberalism that India would never be free, Young Bengal flung the *Bande Mataram* aside, and took to the tenets of revolution. *The Yugantar* which started the revolutionary gospel in Bengal tore the heart out of the legalism of the *Bande Mataram* by casting the challenge in its teeth to point out the country in the history of the world which had achieved political independence by means of non-violent passive

resistance. The *Bande Mataram* fell quickly into comparative insignificance after that whilst the *Yugantar* rose sky-high into the splendour of public favour, and captured the heart of youth.

For the life of me I cannot see how Mr. Gandhi's *Young India* is going to avert the fate which overtook the *Bande Mataram* if it is going to preach the ideal of independence with anything like the reality of accent which was in the utterances of its prototype in Bengal. For it will take less than a year to convince the country of the utter impossibility of its attaining *Swaraj* by following the procedure Gandhi has laid before it. It is certain the British will not oblige him by leaving India at his request ; they are a somewhat tenacious people, as everybody knows. How will Mr. Gandhi bring them to a halt? The legal profession is going on as before, and will record a vote of thanks in his favour if he can relieve it of its present overcrowding by drawing away a few of its superfluous senior and junior members. Besides, it will be well for Mr. Gandhi to remember that there are the British lawyers ready to carry on, and do their bit for the Empire, by earning all the money they can in the legal professions of this country. All the services of Government go on as merrily now as they did before the last session of the Congress, and bid fair to go on even after the Congress has held its next session. Mr. Gandhi has yet to learn the psychology of the men who serve Government. He will find them adamant against the

seductions of his eloquence. The Police Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and the Constables of Bengal intrepidly risked their lives upholding their Government against the attacks of the party of revolution. Men who have demonstrated their loyalty to Government by surviving the test of death staring them in the face are likely to outlast the temptations of non-violent non-co-operation. And Government have been organising their Indian services on the hereditary principle to give them further strength against contingencies like *Gandhism*. Mr. Gandhi will make no serious attempt, one imagines, to disorganise the Railway, Postal and Telegraph services. And one can say therefore that Government will remain quite impregnable on its civil side. On the military side Mr. Gandhi's propaganda has even a less chance. Renunciation, fasting, and penance make small appeal to men trained against death ; and the same may be said of non-violent non-co-operation. The men who succeeded in alienating parts of the Indian Army from their allegiance to the British were of the cult of violence, and went to them with their life in their hands. And the soldiers and their revolutionary associates paid for their acts in a way not likely to be soon forgotten by the Army. Mr. Gandhi must also admit to himself the impossibility of weaning away more than a mere percentage of the school and college-going students, and Government have nothing to fear from his reorganising them into schools and colleges fashioned

after his heart. The boycott of foreign goods need not be seriously discussed in the light of Mr. Gandhi's own pronouncements thereon. If *Swadeshi* fructifies into the upbuilding of an industrially prosperous India, Government will thank Mr. Gandhi for the addition to its revenue from the income-tax. The continuation of the avoidance of the Councils will keep Government free of Mr. Gandhi and men of his way of thinking, but are not likely to keep them empty. Well, even if they remained empty England would hardly be in tears about it.

When the disillusionment is complete, and *Swaraj* is as far from materialising at the year's end as it was at the time of Gandhi's promise of it, what can be its effect upon the youth of the country, provided the message of Gandhi has in the meantime sunk as deep into its mind as that of the *Bande Mataram* did into the mind of Young India? Nothing but that terrible disappointment at the result of non-violent non-co-operation which had summoned the *Yugantar* into life, and all the aftermath of that birth. Mr. Gandhi may accept my earnest assurance that the men who spoke to the country through the columns of the *Bande Mataram* looked forward like him to the peaceful process of India growing into the stature of a free country. The unreality of their optimism has been brought home to them by the scorching fire of experience, in the light of which the present writer feels it to be his impera-

tive duty to warn Mr. Gandhi of the overwhelming probability of the disappointed Young India of 1922 reacting in the way it did in 1908 onward. I would not have spoken my mind at such length on this question, had I not been absolutely convinced of the sincerity of Mr. Gandhi's aversion to violence.

Some of Mr. Gandhi's supporters will have it, however, that he is not merely a saintly person, as I and others like me imagine, but that he is a great diplomat, and is really making for a revolution on a far greater scale than has hitherto happened. It is interesting to note, in passing, how like Shakespeare Mr. Gandhi has managed to call most dissimilar types of admirers into being. Personally I discard this estimate of Mr. Gandhi totally. But while I am about it, I may as well tackle this particular school of commentators on *Gandhism* by examining into the prospect of a second revolutionary movement in India. The very first consideration to be borne in mind is that Mr. Gandhi's failure to realise *Swaraj* by way of non-co-operation will not in the least affect the main body of the young men who have returned from the Andamans, and the various jails, and internment. They have absolutely forsworn violence in view of the new order inaugurated into India by Great Britain, and are not in the non-co-operation movement. This particular fact is within my certain personal knowledge, and I naturally refrain from arguing about it. The revolutionary propa-

ganda which will germinate on the soil of unsuccessful non-co-operation will have thus to begin all over again ; and will most probably be snuffed out in its very first stage of literary expression, now that the Police possess greater knowledge and experience, and the Rowlatt Act places in the hands of Government a tremendous power of inquisition and suppression. The further difficulty will confront the revolutionaries that all the Governments, Imperial and Provincial, will be jointly British and Indian, and one can hardly imagine even the most truculent of disappointed non-co-operators congratulating the country on the assassination of an Indian Governor, or member of one of the Executive Councils, or a Minister, each one of whom must identify himself during continuance in office with his particular Government, and consequently run the risk of assassination. It is not difficult to imagine the deep revulsion of feeling which such an act would be sure to give rise to, specially amongst the great body of India's newly enfranchised masses, whose sympathies will naturally be with their representatives, that is, with the co-operators with Government, since non-co-operators will not have sought their suffrages at all. And as the vast number of men constituting the new electorate get imbued with political understanding with the advance of years, they shall become politically far more important than the whole collection of non-co-operators inside and outside the Congress. With these

men ranged against non-co-operation, a revolution based on the ethics of non-co-operation will have little chance of making headway. The mere apathy of the masses was enough of a damper on the revolutionary movement that is over ; to have to count with their active hostility would be all but an insuperable bar against the progress of revolutionary methods in the country. One can anticipate the argument that the newly enfranchised classes will have been won over to non-co-operation by Mr. Gandhi long before the revolutionary movement begins, so that the masses shall be on the side of, and not against, that movement. It is difficult, however, to imagine a permanently successful campaign of non-co-operation amongst these men. What has Mr. Gandhi to offer them as against the great prospect opened up to them by the "Reforms"? The latter invest them with the very real power of choosing their own representatives, responsible to them, for the purpose of spending the enormous sums of money which will come into the hands of those men, for the betterment of their lives, for the upbuilding of their health, wealth and knowledge. Everybody knows of the surpluses which are coming to the Ministers in the provinces (excepting Bengal and Behar), and every one will further allow that the men of the Moderate party who will form the provincial Ministries are just as penetrated by the yearning desire to serve their fellow-beings as their political rivals : and it is, I venture to think, a safe

prediction to make that in course of the next ten years the enfranchised masses will make the discovery that they are getting the real needs of their life attended to, not by an alien and unapproachable Bureaucracy, but by men of their own choosing, whom they may continue or not as their servants and representatives, according as they give a good or indifferent account of how they have exercised their privilege of serving their fellowmen. Over against the solid rock of this reality, what is the political destination to which non-co-operation invites them? Continuance in the degradation and untouchability in which their "high-caste" compatriots have been content to hold the mass of them, added to the pleasure of seeing their land and chattels sold up for non-payment of taxes which is the main species of non-co-operation to which they can resort. Let the non-co-operators of Bengal try their hand, by way of disproving my contention, at weaning away to their side the village folk of the area in East Bengal where village self-government has gone on for some time on an experimental scale. I venture to affirm with some confidence that a revolutionary movement drawing its sustenance from the soil of non-co-operation will find the masses of India ranged against itself.

The question I should next put to the prophets of a second revolutionary propaganda is, what can it do for India? One does most devoutly wish that these gentlemen, and for the matter of that, every

Indian, would seriously study the movement which began with the *Yugantar*, and ceased the other day with the Royal declaration of an amnesty. It would bring them into the presence of an incandescent reality in the light of which they may re-read the political history of British India with some profit to their country and—themselves.

It was initiated, as already said, by the *Yugantar* taking its stand on the ground of England's refusal to put India on the road to freedom, which it condemned as an ungodly attempt on the part of one country to kill the soul of another. For the Bureaucracy and Indian civilisation could not live conterminously, and Great Britain's determination to perpetuate the former was significant of her intention to perish the latter. Is there an Indian worth the name, it asked, who would willingly let India's culture die? The constitutional agitation of the Congress must give place now, the *Yugantar* demanded, to a second call to *Kurukshetra* for re-enthroning the motherland in her eternal *Dharma*. Awake, sleeping youth of India, it cried at its loudest; pour out the river of blood that shall cleanse, and bear away like the holy Ganges the sins of the bygone generations,—those that fruitlessly rose and sank on the Mother's bosom, like rank vegetation,—unconscious of her tears and her pain. Whilst Government looked on with amused interest what time its clerks and servants, and the whole reading public of Bengal were daily poring over the *Yugantar* with

a greedy interest, it was effectively transmuting the psychology of Young Bengal with its note of reality. The magnificent oratory of Mr. Banerjea and of Mr. Pal had elicited the young Bengalee's admiration ; but the *Yugantar's* summon to re-enact a second *Kurukshetra* burned into his heart, made way through it like living fire into the depths of his being to ignite the inflammability of his youth's daring. It soon incited a riot in his blood, lashed up his spirit into a storm and tumult, undreamt-of in the philosophies of the Bureaucracy and the Congress. And when the first peal of it crashed out in the thunder of a detonating bomb, it took them both by equal surprise. They had all the time remained unaware that death had lost its sting for the youths of Bengal whom the *Yugantar* had touched up into life, that it had come to signify to them a sacramental expiation to win India back to immortality. The Bureaucracy took immediately to repressive legislation, as it was bound to ; and the Congress kept crying not to be held responsible for it. The movement set going by the *Yugantar,* however, went on, spreading from Bengal westward, and the last of its story was recorded more than a year ago in the Mainpuri Conspiracy Case. I must desist from the attempt to write the history of the movement, as it would take me away from my present subject, and as sufficient time has not elapsed yet to enable one to write of it with that absolute detachment which is essential to an historical narrative. But I would ask my country-

men to read through the reports of the Conspiracy trials held in the different parts of India with a view to getting hold of the essential facts of the movement. Doing so, they would be convinced of the impossibility of a revolutionary campaign bringing India independence. The young men who organised the last one possessed the coolness of soldiers standing their ground in the face of a grinning death's head ; yet they failed, as they were bound to ; for no sooner had they begun than they found themselves closed in between the two high walls of indifference growing into hostility on the part of their educated countrymen, Extremists and Moderates alike, and of the masses. They kept their spirits up running back and forward inside this closed alley, while from over the two sides rang the shots of the police killing them, and being killed. It soon developed into the tragedy of a struggle of broken wings against the prison-bars, the result of a trial of strength between the whole might of the British and a limited number of youths divorced from the sympathies of the body of their countrymen being a foregone conclusion. So secure was British authority in India in face of the bombs and revolvers the young insurgents wielded that the Viceroy who had himself had a bomb thrown on him could denude the country of all but 10,000 British soldiers at a moment of stress during the War without fear of serious consequences. Bombs can never bring independence, Barindra Kumar Ghose had predicted in

the Alipore Trial, and the testimony of the years that have gone past has confirmed that prediction to the fullest. To wish for the repitition of a movement which has failed for reasons that not only exist now in all their pristine vigour, but have been strengthened considerably by virtue of the recent introduction of political reforms, as we have seen, is really to stultify oneself, and to betray a disheartening want of the sense of responsibility which surely must be at the foundation of our demand for responsible government.

The last revoluntionary propaganda threw into vivid relief the two outstanding facts of Indian life, the deep-rooted aversion of the classes to violence, and the apathy of the masses to whatever may be happening in the political mind of India. Aurobindo of Bengal warning the country against infractions of the law is revived in Gandhi of Guzerat conjuring his countrymen not to break the public peace with the same emphasis and earnestness. And the masses continue to-day in the same pathetic, placid contentment (or want of it?) in which they were in the political era of Aurobindo, and in which, in fact, India's ancient social order had put them in days long ago. Yet the problem of Indian freedom is nothing short of the problem of how to develop in the average Indian the political capacity of the average citizen of a free country. India who aspires to be the political equal of Great Britain, France or Japan, must take note of the fundamental

fact that from the point of view of political capacity her exception is the average in those countries. The average Britisher, Frenchman or Japanese would be ready at the shortest notice to fling down and leave behind all private interests or ties that hold him to life for the sake of his country ; it is the exceptional Indian who would rush to the same sacrifice for the sake of India. How shall she attain to freedom unless she has succeeded in converting her exception of to-day into her average of to-morrow? We have all been going to the Congress, hearing fine speeches, passing resolutions, shouting *Bande Mataram* (displaced now-a-days by the personal cry of *Gandhiji ki jai*), to return home to relapse into the felicities of domestic life. But if a process such as this could have led a country to freedom, we should have been the freest of Asiatic peoples by this time. As we have seen, the consciousness dawned on the Bengal Nationalists roused into the warmth of reality by the shock of the Partition that the Congress could not create Indian freedom, and that the way to it lay through non-violent passive resistance. When this too failed to fetch the miracle, India's youths flung themselves into the desperation of a revolutionary propaganda with the great idea of redeeming her from subjection with the price of their lives. And they too have failed.

Mr. Gandhi will therefore forgive those of his countrymen who refuse to accompany him back into the same circle of futility. And it is the prayer of

one of them that he may, on the other hand, persuade himself to study the views of those who differ from him, just to assure himself that he may not be in the wrong. Many hold the opinion firmly that Mr. Gandhi is presenting the spectacle of the right man being in the wrong movement. Will he inform his countrymen how non-co-operation will succeed in evoking in the average Indian the patriotism of the average free citizen? I have been reading through his utterances in vain for a clue to this fundamental problem. Does he not realise that non-co-operation is too negative an endeavour to lead a country into freedom? The men in a subject country must live like men in all countries; and the main avenues of livelihood in India for the members of its educated middle-classes who must constitute the backbone of the movement for freedom are employment under Government, and the legal and medical professions. It may be the most unfortunate thing in the world that the conditions of middle-class life are so ordained in India, but the fact is there staring us insolently in the face. One may, no doubt, exclaim by way of a moving peroration, "Better death than life under such conditions!" and may be rewarded by ringing cheers from audiences composed of men other than Government servants and practising doctors and lawyers. But matters remain just where they were. People who may even rush into death under the inspiration of the moment will refuse an invitation to starve

indefinitely in the cause of patriotism. I do not desire to repeat my previous arguments, but Mr. Gandhi must surely realise that he cannot come anywhere near making Government break down in these circumstances. One feels that Mr. Gandhi has begun to have fugitive glimpses of these facts in as much as he has called upon his countrymen to cease to propagate until they attain *Swaraj*. For, this call to eunuchism, not indeed for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven (with which prophets of all countries have made us familiar), but for the sake of *Swaraj*, translates itself into the cry of Mr. Gandhi's soul, "Either *Swaraj* or perish India." That such a thought should visit Mr. Gandhi so close on the heels of his promise of *Swaraj* to his countrymen within a twelvemonth, takes one's mind back to Milton beginning to write his famous tract on divorce just after his marriage. His biographer tells us that Milton did so under a terrible sense of disappointment in matrimony ; is Mr. Gandhi being troubled by any intuition of the gods going to refuse the gift of *swaraj* through the miracle of non-co-operation ?

Apart from Gandhi and his unquestioning followers, I would ask those of my educated countrymen who are subscribing to his non-co-operative tenets by deliberate conviction to show India the way to develop in the average Indian the political capacity of the average citizen of a free country. Of course, this is the way the problem of Indian

freedom presents itself to my humble understanding. I should be sincerely grateful to be told other ways. One possible reply that I can anticipate is that India must first secure her independence, and then train herself in democracy. The difficulty arises in finding out the means of achieving independence. Is she to invoke the aid of a foreign power to help her drive the British out? Should some Asiatic country undertake the task and carry it to a successful issue, would it not be likely to claim the mastery of India as the just reward of its labours, even as the British themselves did after ridding us of the domination of Islam at our invitation? One has yet to be informed of the nation which is likely to prove itself more disinterested in this respect than the British. The academic question of the Indian Princes combining to expel the British may, I think, be left out of account with the consent of all. I have already dwelt on the circumstances pointing to the strong improbability of India making herself independent by means of a revolution. If independence is unattainable, how is the Indian to grow into the stature of the free man? I think I hear an impassioned patriot cry out that the country which has produced such towering personalities as Tilak and Gandhi will be sure to give birth to their like by the thousand in God's good time. Yes, but how? By special grace, or by pursuit of policy previously thought out? Up to the present time India has rather been a country of exceptional personalities, with a *difference in kind*

dividing them from their commoner countrymen. Tilak risked and underwent imprisonment when he thought the interests of his country to require it ; but his followers have remained far below this height of personal sacrifice. The inequality between Gandhi and those who shout his *Jai* is too palpably evident to require elucidation. This would have mattered little, and would indeed have been a helpful circumstance, had our objective been a theocratic or political autocracy, and not democracy. But since it is the latter type of polity we are aspiring to, India has to make her average son and daughter worthy of it. There are towering personalities in democratic countries, of course; but the leader of a democracy is really "first among equals." The presupposition of democracy is, as we have seen, that those who belong to it must be ready and willing throughout their lives to sacrifice their all for its sake. The ordinary Englishman sent his son to the front no less readily than Asquith or Bonar Law,—and lost him. The whole of England's or France's fighting material flung itself into the holocaust of the last War, and not merely a handful of either country's "towering personalities." The Prime Minister of Great Britain or the President of the French Republic stands on the common ground with humblest of his countrymen of a life-long alertness to die for the country at the first sound of the call to death. We should do well to bear the fact in mind that apart from the scholarly attainments which distinguished him, Tilak would have been an ordi-

nary, and not an exceptional, citizen of a free state. Not one, but a hundred thousand, would take up the challenge against the Government of a free country that sought to interfere in any way with the rights of its citizens. I fail to see how non-co-operation is going to present India with even a few million sons and daughters possessing the stuff of freedom, and how else it can give her the preliminary start in democracy.

I would appeal to my countrymen to realise that the task confronting the worker in the cause of India's freedom is nothing short of the fundamental transformation of the psychology of her people. They have to grow into the reasoned and deliberate love of freedom out of their present lazy acquiescence in the want of it, and out of their insatiable craving for mere display which alas! takes only too many of them to the excitement of the Congress and its speeches. India must re-vitalise the atrophied will of her children, must hammer it back into the power of setting into the inflexible rigidity of a purpose. Let their will be iron first, and then alone can the shock of freedom awaken out of it a thousand inextinguishable sparks. And the task has become the less difficult of accomplishment now that Great Britain has publicly avowed her resolve not to hinder India from getting on with it.

One of the greatest discoveries of our times is the transmuting power of education in relation to man's mind and character. A conception like patriotism

stamped into the malleability of the child's mind flowers into character with the growth of the child into the man. So does any other idea fixed into the plasticity of the adolescent mind in the workshop of education. Every one will think instinctively of the two great peoples of the modern world who have within living memory succeeded in deliberately transforming their national psychology in definite directions by instilling the desired ideas into the minds of their boys and youths in their Schools and Universities. No miracle of an easier method can enable India to grow into the psychology of freedom. She must undertake the education of her children on a universal scale in the principles of patriotism. Through childhood and youth her sons and daughters must be taught to look for their moral and spiritual sustenance in the vitality of the thought that they are not merely to live and die *in* India, but live and die *for* India. This one great thought must constitute the main burden of the instruction given them: it must enter into the texture of their growing mind, and the colour of all their dreams. And it shall be reinforced by all the facts of India's history, all the treasures of her literature, the supremacy of her philosophic thinking, the permanent validity of her code of right-doing being brought home to them through every process available to the teacher from the inception of their education to its end. In one sentence India must nationalise her education that she may nationalise her psychology. It is only in an India possessing

children at one with her spirit—their vision of India's future growing out of the revelation of her past, the pride of country in every fibre of their being, the vital inspiration filling them with a real faith in her greatness, in the necessity of her playing a worthy part in the up-building of the moral and spiritual well-being of the human race—that one can legitimately look forward to the birth of a new generation which shall love and serve her, and regard the highest sacrifice in her cause as the normal obligation of their lives, like the children of free countries.

This was the idea which lay at the heart of the cry for national education that went up from Bengal in those days of which I have spoken ; and the National Council of Education with the thirty National Schools affiliated thereunder constituted its overt expression. But the fact became apparent that private efforts would be unequal to accomplishing even a part of the work which the movement for national education signified. As the months and the years passed, the conviction deepened that India must obtain control of the resources of her State before she could undertake the education of her children on a sufficient scale to nationalise their spirit. The least start she could make would be by introducing education of the Nationalistic type into *all* her existing schools and colleges ; but even this beginning was denied her in that she had no control of either of these institutions, or of the funds spent on them.

The prospects of Indian freedom can hardly be

said to have taken on the hue of roses by the year 1910. Great Britain held out no indications of altering her theory of personal rule being the best type of Government for her Dependency. Political activities were more or less in abeyance but for the talking which was going on in the Legislative Councils. Eastern Bengal was keeping up its boycott of British goods with much effort. Most of the National Schools had gone out under a suffocating police surveillance ; the National Council of Education itself was more or less of a suspect corporation ; and all the *Samitis* and *Akharas* for physical culture had been wiped out. The industries, too, founded in the enthusiasm of *Swadeshi*, were on their hardest trial. The *Karma Yogin* of Aurobindo Ghose was continuing the *Bande Mataram* tradition of non-violent passive resistance, but the swarm of spies surrounding him hardly gave him time to move or breathe. And the revolvers of the revolutionaries were spitting fire intermittently.

Yet in the midst of the gathering gloom the vision swam before Aurobindo's seeing eyes of Great Britain installing India in *Partial Swaraj as a step and means towards complete Swaraj*. What were the forces operating on his mind I do not claim to know ; but the fact stands out that he clearly pictured to himself the eventuality of the British putting Indians in control of one or more departments of Government, and that he adjured his countrymen to co-operate with Britishers to the extent of the

control which might be conceded. I prefer to give below his own words which, I think, will well bear a second public quotation. "It is generally supposed that the Nationalist party is committed to the persistent and uncompromising refusal of co-operation until they get the full concession of *Swaraj*. Nationalist publicists have not cared to combat this error explicitly, because they were more anxious to get their ideal accepted, and the spirit of passive resistance and complete self-help popularised, than to discuss a question which was not then a part of practical politics. *But it is obvious that a party advancing such a proposition would be a party of doctrinaires and idealists, not of practical thinkers and workers.* The Nationalist principle is the principle of 'no control, no co-operation'. Since all control has been refused, and *so long as all control is refused*, the Nationalist party preaches the refusal of co-operation as complete as we can make it. But it is evident that if, for instance, the power of imposing protective duties were given to a popular and elective body, no serious political party would prefer persistence in commercial boycott to the use of the powers conceded. Or if education were similarly made free of official control and entrusted to a popular body, as Lord Reay once thought of entrusting it, no sensible politician would ask any one to boycott that education. Or if the Courts were manned by Indian Judges and made responsible not to the executive but to a Minister representing the

people, arbitration would immediately take its place as a supplementary aid to the regular courts. So also the refusal to co-operate in an administration which excludes the people from an effective voice does not involve a refusal to co-operate in an administration of which the people are an effective part. The refusal of autocratic gifts does not involve a refusal to take up popular rights inalienably secured to the people. It is, on the contrary, with the object of compelling the concession of the various elements of *Swaraj* by peaceful moral pressure, and in the absence of such concessions, developing our own institutions to the gradual extrusion and final supplanting of bureaucratic institutions that the policy of self-help and passive resistance was started. The acceptance of popular rights does not imply the abandonment of the ideal of complete autonomy, or of the use of passive resistance in case of any future arbitrary interference with the rights of the people. *It implies only the use of partial Swaraj as a step and means towards complete Swaraj.*"

Aurobindo Ghose formulated this theory of partial *Swaraj* at a time he was daily expecting to be deported. The thought had visited him, too, that he might not return from his deportation. A mood of deep solemnity was on him. The feeling could not but tear at his heart that the voice of Nationalism would fall silent with his removal from Bengal ; and the further fact was too patent to miss his scrutiny that there was none to stand in his absence between

the Government and the party of revolution, demanding freedom of the former with unfaltering emphasis, and warning the latter of the impossibility of revolvers winning India independence. A few years had passed by since the promulgation of the Nationalist policy of self-help and passive resistance, and it was now possible in the light of experience to make a pronouncement on the future constructive policy of the Nationalist party, as apart from its propagandist work that had so long gone on.

The method of political propaganda was obviously different from that of political construction. The propagandist must put the real in terms of the ideal, the present in terms of the future, in order to arouse feeling and produce the vividness of impression. He would, for example, call India the greatest country in the world before an audience of his countrymen, although in fact she was far from being so in her present condition ; but by so putting her present before his hearers in terms of her future he would evoke the faith in them in her greatness, and make her appear before them as the worthy object of their patriotic endeavours. One might similarly put one's countrymen into an optimistic mood by saying that India was worth her weight in gold because of all the potential wealth waiting to be dug out of her soil. But when the Nationalist leader had to invite his fellowmen to the task of construction, he would have to keep to the real and the present in the spirit and the manner of the man of science. Starting

a *swadeshi* Mill, for instance, he could not stultify himself by appealing to a meeting of share-holders to declare a dividend in anticipation of the profits the enterprise was certain to realise in time. And similarly, in putting before Indians a scheme of political reconstruction which might be immediately worked by them, he would have to build it up on the basis of the actual facts of their life. The greatness of his scheme would undoubtedly consist in its avoidance of rigidity and taking cognisance of the plasticity of life, and being therefore so ordered that it would keep pace with, and help forward, life's innate expansiveness. By doing so he would ally himself with life, and consequently provide against the mischance of being thwarted by the future possibilities of its growth. But he would be constructing nothing at all if he were to embody the ultimate term of his propaganda into a scheme to be worked in the present. If he were to insist on Indians founding a polity of immediate *Swaraj* or nothing, would he not necessarily relegate his countrymen to nothing? The fact of this essential difference separating propagandist from constructive work was illustrated not so long ago by the Indian National Congress. The Lucknow Session spared no words to condemn Lord Sinha's dictum of the previous year that the day of full *Swaraj* was not yet. But in the very same session the leaders of the Congress and the Moslem League drew up a scheme of Government for Great Britain's

immediate acceptance which bore on its own face the stamp of "Not yet."

Aurobindo Ghose, who was far more than a politician and mere advocate of the negative gospel of passive resistance, felt the obligation to enunciate his constructive programme before being removed from the arena of work, for the future guidance of his countrymen. He knew too much of England and India not to know that the unnatural relationship in which they were continuing was bound to break down, and that England would have to put India on the road to freedom as soon as her persistence in the Bureaucratic method brought her face to face with the prospect of wholly alienating the moral support of India's rising generation. And so he wrote his "Last Will and Testament" wherein he warned his fellowmen not to accept the shadow for the substance of freedom in the shape of any illusory scheme of political reconstruction that Great Britain might offer them, *but not to reject the substance either and, on the contrary, be ready to accept it when it was offered.* It was clear that England would not wave a wand over India one fine morning, and say to her "Be free," but that she would be much more likely to put her through a strenuous preparation for it when she was ultimately compelled to recognise and declare India's right to freedom. And he laid down a test whereby his countrymen were to discover the reality or unreality of all prospective reforms. It was "no control, no co-operation." If one or more

departments of Government were transferred into the control of a popular and elective body with one or more Ministers responsible to that body, Aurobindo would have India co-operate with Great Britain on the basis of such transference of control. For doing so, she would be taking the road to complete *Swaraj*.

In the light of all the foregoing circumstances, I would ask my countrymen to accept Aurobindo's ideal of partial *Swaraj* as a step and means towards complete *Swaraj* over against Gandhi's creed of complete non-co-operation or complete *Swaraj*. I would conclude by reminding them that Aurobindo possessed greater knowledge of Indians in India than Gandhi ; that he had begun by preaching the very doctrine which Gandhi is now promulgating, that he did so with an eloquence, with an exaltation, urgency, and passion, denied to Gandhi ; that his tenets fell on a more fertile soil, and germinated into a reality of far greater extent and effect than Gandhi's have ; that his advocacy of partial *Swaraj* derived its authority from his intimate experience extending over half a decade of the working of the principle of non-co-operation ; and that the political thought of India has not advanced a step further than where he left it.

III

PARTIAL SWARAJ

AND

AN APPEAL TO Mr. GANDHI

REFORMS AND SWARAJ

We have come to know Gandhi the propagandist with some nearness of sight. When will he reveal to his countrymen the vision of Gandhi the political builder? He has been anointed the people's saint. But for all his sainthood many of his countrymen cannot shake themselves free of the fact that he had been called to the Bar, and gone through the schooling of life in one of its most disenchanting phases as a practising lawyer. It is difficult to imagine him continuing satisfied in his heart of hearts with the mere pursuit of a discarnate ideal with no thought of embodying it into the reality of an organised existence. He cannot but be aware that *the* problem of our present political life is to nationalise the constitution of the Government of India, and not to dissi-

pate the energy of the people in the vanity of an endeavour to build up a rival organisation thereto. The sheer impossibility of getting together the necessary funds for undertaking to do by our own efforts in our own way any perceptible fraction of the work which Government get done for us must by this time be stamping itself into his consciousness. And the poverty of the available human material to be transformed into the stuff of freedom will blind his eyes with tears as he goes on.

Yet go on he must, for the spirit in him urges him restlessly to doing and daring, and men like me would rather be with him than away from him, for there is none in India to-day holding before her such an arousing ideal of life's consecration as he. But many of those who took up the cry fifteen years ago of mending or ending the British overlordship are by now convinced of the impossibility of their countrymen ending it by rebellion, or a revolution, and eagerly look forward, therefore, to Mr. Gandhi making a pronouncement on the extent and the amount of 'mending' which would enlist his co-operation in the cause of Britain and India jointly undertaking the task of building up Indian freedom. Will he, like Aurobindo, point out the temporary resting-place to his countrymen between absolute *Swaraj* and absolute non-co-operation? Let him draw up his minimum charter on the basis of which he would be ready to call upon his fellowmen to desist from non-co-operation. Apart from the ques-

tion of whether the new Government of India Act realises Aurobindo's conception of partial *Swaraj* or not, would Mr. Gandhi inform men like myself if he would have us offer co-operation to the British on the terms on which Aurobindo said we might, or on such other terms that he may deem worthier of the country? I appeal to him on behalf of not an inconsiderable number of his countrymen for a statement of his views on the question I have asked, as they can only decide in the light of his answer thereto whether or not they shall owe him political allegiance.

It is in this very connexion that I beg to put before him the considerations which have led a number of adherents of the old Nationalist party of Bengal to subscribe to the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms as the first real step towards Indian freedom. They appeal powerfuly, in the first place, to the democratic spirit of modern India by formulating the ideal of resposible Government as being the goal of British Indian policy, and show the way to a welcome escape from the outworn thought of substituting the alien, by an indigenous, Bureaucracy. The next essential circumstance reconciling one to the last Government of India Act is that its enactment was accompanied by the promulgation of an amnesty for the youths who "in their eagerness for political progress had broken the law." To me personally, this one little fact goes far to outweigh all the criticism which has been directed against the new Act. It makes one realise that Great Britain has not intro-

duced these reforms as a mere concession to oratorical achievements, but in genuine response to the new longing for freedom which was driving the youth of India into exile, durance or death, consequences hardly ever dreamed of by protagonists of the Congress, past, and present. The Britisher does not know fear, and was for that very reason, I believe, led into a new view of India's future when he found India giving birth to youths in numbers who had conquered fear. He has greeted this new birth with a new message—that of freedom. Unless Great Britain were sincere and loyal in her promise of freedom I cannot within the limits of my humble intelligence find an explanation for her bringing back Barindra Kumar Ghose, Pulin Behari Das, Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Bhai Paramanando, and many others like them who, according to the finding of her Judges, had been planning to rid India of her presence. The release of these men seems to me not only to register the high-water mark of her courageousness, but also the height of her resolve to initiate the Indian into his inalienable human heritage of freedom. And a little mental exertion leads one to the discovery of the further fact that the new charter effectively abolishes the antithesis between the Bureacratic ideal and Indian nationalism which had ridden the political consciousness of India like a nightmare during the past 15 years. The *Bande Mataram* called on its countrymen to grow in health, wealth, and knowledge in order to acquire the fitness to be free; but sanita-

tion, industry and agriculture, and education were matters over which the Bureaucracy exercised absolute control which they betrayed no symptoms of even modifying in response to popular wishes or ideals. The *Bande Mataram* flung its challenge to the Bureaucracy by way of asking India to reorganise these departments of her life with her own efforts apart from the Bureaucratic system, and we have already gone into the history of what happened in the result. Parliament have now transferred the control of these very departments into the hands of Ministers who will be responsible to popular and elective bodies. What the *Bande Mataram* would have the people do, the Government of India Act now authorises the people to do, and denudes the Bureaucracy at the same time of the right to interfere with the people's representatives in respect of their management of these departments. That is to say, the Nationalist programme of self-help has now transmigrated into a Parliamentary enactment. It is difficult to see how the Nationalist can still cry "Non-co-operation."

There are two conditions, of course, to the Nationalist programme being given legal effect by the new Councils. One is that the Nationalists shall seek election to the provincial legislatures, and the other that they shall be returned to them in a majority. Since the power has been vested in the majority to refuse supplies to the Ministers in charge of the transferred departments, it hardly requires the vision of a prophet to predict that the Ministers must

be chosen from the party possessing the greater number of votes. And whatever doubt may have so long been cherished by some of the anti-reformists has at last been set at rest by Lord Sinha who has said in plain language that the Governor will have to nominate his ministers from the party in majority in the provincial assembly. If Mr. Gandhi were to come into the Bombay Council at the head of a majority, he and his colleagues must needs be the Ministers, and could the Presidency wish for a greater consummation than having Mr. Gandhi, say, for its Minister of Education? So far from having to depend on his own little University only for the propagation of nationalism, Mr. Gandhi would have the power and the opportunity to nationalise the education of the whole of his province. And similar results would follow in the other provinces upon their Nationalist leaders coming into their Councils with majorities at their back. Can Mr. Gandhi think of a more effective plan for converting his countrymen's "slave mentality" into that of freedom than a simultaneous nationalisation of education in all the provinces? This is precisely what the Government of India Act enables Indian nationalists to achieve, and what valid reasons has Mr. Gandhi given for refusing to take up this work? As in the matter of education, so also in regard to the Nationalist programme of building up the health and wealth of the people, Indian Nationalists have now the opportunity given them of translating their ideas into legislative effect by suc-

cessfully persuading the voters to return them in a majority to all the Provincial Councils.

The presupposition of such an achievement thus is that the Nationalists must succeed in persuading their enfranchised countrymen to send the majority of them to the Councils. Does not Mr. Gandhi realise that in this very circumstance lies a spiritual event of the deepest moment to his country? Surely there must be some deep-seated reason accounting for the fact of India's continuance in political subjection for so many centuries. To my thinking it lies in the neighbourhood of the fact that she had permanently disfranchised the mass of her *Shudra*, and condemned them to the dishonour of untouchability. With the mass of her children divorced from all concern in the maintenance of her political welfare, India was bound in course of time to succumb to any democratic Power that wanted to wrest the sceptre from the grasp of her *Brahman* and *Kshatriya*. Islam whose adherents stood together as equals and brothers did this without much difficulty, and when the Islamic peoples of India grew nerveless and effete, Great Britain stepped into the vacancy made by them with the same ease. The *Brahman* and *Kshatriya* of India had to feel in themselves the lot of the slave and the outcast, as Aurobindo Ghose had once observed in the *Bande Mataram*, by way of a real atonement for the awful sin they had committed of reducing their fellowmen to the unthinkable degradation of untouchability. All the talk of

Congressmen about democracy and equality was as empty air as long as they could reconcile themselves to the circumstance of even a single countryman of theirs continuing untouchable. For all her contact with the West and its creed of liberty, equality, fraternity, India could not cast off her sufferance of untouchability to the end of the nineteenth century. And through the interminable ages the masses patiently waited to be received into the communion of India's twice-born, like the wayside temple of Roman history with the splendid inscription on its front "Here too is God."

The perception of her sin and of her subjection as the wages thereof grew upon India with the coming of the new century. We all know how the finer spirits amongst her high-caste children have been devoting themselves for the last two decades to the task of banishing untouchability from her borders ; and the social work of Young India in this direction already constitutes a land-mark in Indian history. And now Great Britain makes her memorable contribution to the fulfilment of this task. She has enfranchised the immemorially disfranchised masses of India. The untouchable now possesses the right equally with the touchable of selecting the men who are to take up the work of nation-building by way of managing the transferred departments of provincial Governments. The man who will seek his suffrage will either touch him or go without his vote, as the high-caste candidates for the late elec-

tion to the Council have already discovered in many parts of Bengal. The tendency will manifest itself with the greater emphasis at the next election, and as time goes on, and the franchise is extended, the disinherited children of Hindu India shall be the inheritors of political power in British India, and the men who will refuse to touch them shall have themselves become untouchable. I have not the smallest desire to argue with the neo-Extremist who will argue anything, but I appeal to Mr. Gandhi to say if this is not a glowing reality in the light of which all the bravery of the Congress pales into unimportance.

Mr. Gandhi may make the reply that the freedom which England is introducing into India is but a counterfeit thing since the former will not permit the latter the freedom to shape her destiny in absolute independence of the British, and is determined, on the contrary, to hold her to the creed of the "British connexion." But Mr. Gandhi must surely perceive that the British connexion symbolises the atonement that India must make for the great sin of her past history ; that her dream of independence must remain the merest vanity for as long as she has not taught her Brahman and non-Brahman to clasp each other in brotherhood and equality. It is only after she has attained to this noble fulfilment that she may deliberately ask herself and decide, in the plentitude of her strength, whether she is to retain her membership of the British Empire or be free of

it. And one is tempted to put in the rejoinder that the discussion of this question at the Congress in the present day is a mere counterfeit of the reality that waits upon the consummation of Indian brotherhood. The Government of India Act puts us on the road to that consummation, and to reject it is to defer the reality. Can Mr. Gandhi formulate an alternative plan of equal effect for the redemption of India's untouchables?

Mr. Gandhi is no doubt alive to the further fact that India has not succeeded in expelling the British by an armed rebellion. England, on the contrary, is peacefully introducing free institutions into India (for reasons we have already discussed). Is it not inevitable in these circumstances that England should begin by way of an experiment instead of giving over the whole of India to Indians to manage from the very start? In fact Indian opinion of no shade has ever demanded such a sweeping transfer of power into Indian hands from the very beginning of the new Indian constitution. The scheme of the new Act, however, does not stop with the mere transference of control over some of the departments of the provincial Governments to popular representatives; it provides as we know, for the transfer of further power into popular hands at intervals of 10 years until the whole control of the central and provincial Governments has vested in the people. It is difficult to understand this provision for the progressive popularisation of Government functions except in the

light of England's real determination to let India be mistress in her own house upon the basis of democratic principles. Would Mr. Gandhi kindly explain to his countrymen how otherwise he would have England begin upon the task of giving India free institutions?

The final objection will be urged that India can accept nothing at the hands of Englishmen as long as they remain stained with the blood of those who fell at Jalianwallabagh. Mr. Gandhi may assure himself that we too have felt the mortal agony of soul the pain and the shame and the passion of anger consuming our spirit, burning our heart to cinders, as we have stood watching the wall sprayed with the blood of the mother nursing her baby-boy in the balcony looking out on the Bagh on that evil morning. Men like myself stand on the common ground with Mr. Gandhi of a passionate desire to make a second Jalianwallabagh incident impossible. And I beseech him to tell us how non-co-operation can achieve this end. As far as I can see the only effective way to stop the repetition of such outrages is for the people of India to assume the reins of Government within the minimum of time, and the Government of India Act provides them with the quickest method of doing so. Will not Mr. Gandhi admit that such horrors shall become all but impossible after the whole Government of the provinces has come under the people's control? And, as Lord Sinha has pointed out, and is apparent

from an examination of all the authoritative averments in relation to the constitutional reforms, the surest way for Indians to get the whole of the provincial Governments under their control at the end of the decade, if not earlier, would be for the best of them to come into the Councils and so to manage the transferred departments as to dissipate the last lingering doubts about India's ability to look after herself. None could help this work forward better than Mr. Gandhi, and the tragedy of the present situation is that instead of being a Minister he is spending himself in a lyrical cry after the impossible.

The further fact must be borne in mind in discussing the tragedy of Jalianwallabagh that its perpetrators differ fundamentally in their outlook on India's future from the authors of the constitutional reforms. The former species of British humanity would keep India eternally under the iron heels of England, or perish her ; the latter would have India grow to equality of status with the free nations of the Empire and of the world, and have strenuously laboured to put her on the road to that high destination. And the fact that the British Cabinet have carried the 'reforms' through Parliament, but condemned the Punjab horrors with an unfaltering accent, cannot have escaped even the superficial observer. On what principles of ethics or justice are we invited to reject the 'reforms' as being of tainted origin when we find them emanating from a source

which is clear of the blood that flowed in the Amritsar garden? Dyer and Montagu differ as much as two men belonging to the same country can; how can Mr. Gandhi ask us to have nothing to do with Montagu because Dyer is an abominable person? And this invitation to boycott Montagu along with Dyer is the more weakened by the fact that Mr. Gandhi is not for eschewance of all association with the Englishman generically. He has not warned us off Ben Spoor or Wedgewood, and has been publicly pleading the cause of Mrs. Besant. He believes in Andrews and Arundale. He would apparently co-operate with such Britishers as have the good of India at heart. I have yet to hear Mr. Gandhi say that Montagu wishes evil to India. One has not come across a stronger speech on behalf of India than that of the Secretary of State in Parliament during the Punjab debate. If the Government of India Act is acceptable in itself as tending to the good of our country, we merely stultify ourselves by attempting to base our rejection of it on the ground of its origin. One hears the muttered protest "But what about the Viceroy who is a joint author of the Report"? The short answer to that is that the Congress Committee itself has found the Viceroy to have been unconnected with the Punjab brutalities, and I would ask the followers of Mr. Gandhi to lay that little fact to heart on the eve of their flights into frenzied oratory. They would then be flying to other places than Jalianwallabagh in search of argu-

ments for damning the Reform Scheme. On the question of whether we should not boycott the Councils along with our Muhamadan brethren because of the wrong done to Turkey, I have already drawn Mr. Gandhi's attention to all the salient facts bearing on it. I eagerly await the dawning of the great day on which India's Islamic children shall call out to her as their mother as much as the Hindu's, for, on and from that day Hindu and Muhamadan shall be truly brothers, and serve and suffer for India together without the smallest need of extraneous inspiration.

I appeal to Mr. Gandhi to suspend the non-co-operation movement pending the new dispensation being given a trial. If, as I have supposed, Mr. Gandhi could get himself returned to the Bombay Council at the head of a majority, and if he could, with the aid of his colleagues, carry the whole of his programme of education, sanitation, industrial and agricultural development, co-operative credit and local self-government into legislative effect, then surely he would be doing a great service to his country, and have little cause for preaching non-co-operation. If, on the other hand, he came to find the Bureaucracy ranged against his attempts to carry his Nationalist programme through the Council, and the Standing Committee of the Houses of Parliament backing the Governor's veto thereon, why, then he would be given the most splendid opportunity of carrying his propaganda of non-co-operation

to a decisive issue. For, what would happen on a measure proposed by him as a Minister and passed into law by the majority at his back, being finally vetoed? Mr. Gandhi would as a matter of course resign. The Governor would be unable to carry on the government of the transferred departments with the aid of Ministers selected from the party in minority, as the majority with the power of the purse in their hands would soon bring the minority to a halt. In all probability the Governor would, in these circumstances, dissolve the house in expectation of obtaining a more pliant majority ; but we have little doubt that with all his marvellous energy and magnetism Mr. Gandhi would have little difficulty in being returned a second time with his followers making up the Parliamentary majority. Would not Mr. Gandhi in such an event have a unique chance of non-co-operating in the real way? He would insist on putting his programme through, or refuse to form a Ministry, that is to say, non-co-operate, and thus drive the Governor either into submission to him or to a prayer to the Secretary of State for the suspension or abrogation of the Government of India Act. Does Mr. Gandhi realise the immensity of the power he would be wielding in such a circumstance, and the gravity of the issues he would force on Great Britain? As a propagandist outside the Council he has little chance of coming to possess anything like the powers, or of being at grips with issues having anything like the significance, that he

has as a Minister inside the Council. He would as Minister have the chance of confronting Great Britain with the alternatives of letting Indian Nationalism transmute itself into legal validity through the medium of provincial legislaion, or of converting the Indian political situation into a replica of that in Ireland. For, Parliament's persistence in vetoing a Minister with a majority in the provincial Council would be tantamount to its overriding the wishes of the majority of the provincial voters who would have returned them. When one takes note of the fact that about a million men more or less have been enfranchised in each of the provinces, one has hardly any difficulty in visualising the situation that would arise upon the continuance of a serious conflict between Mr. Gandhi returned with a majority at two successive elections and the Parliamentary Standing Committee holding up the Governor against him. It would mean the beginning of the process which created the Irish discontent. I have little doubt that Great Britain would not drive India into such discontent, and would, on the contrary, let the Minister have his way after he had had his programme re-affirmed a second time by the majority of voters on a dissolution. Why should not Mr. Gandhi give the 'reforms' a real trial instead of asking his countrymen to boycott the Councils on foregone conclusions? And in any event, his programme of non-co-operation would become a living one, instead of remaining a campaign of words, were he only to

carry it into the Council Chamber as one of its elected members.

I admire Mr. Gandhi for reasons I have stated. I know of none, English or Indian, who was not won over to him from the moment of coming into contact with him through the magic of his magnetic personality. The number of my countrymen are few, very few, who worship in the temple of the Mother with the reality of love which is his. And alas! there are none in Bengal in the present hour to name with him. It hurts one deeply to differ from such a son of India as he is. But God has given each one of us the light to see and walk in; and the poor one given me urges my steps along a path that leads away from non-co-operation. I have tried to do justice to the best of my understanding to the point of view from which Mr. Gandhi looks on India's political problems. Should I have unwittingly said anything to wound his feelings I would beg him to forgive me as an elder brother would a younger.

SUPPLEMENT

SUPPLEMENT

NON-CO-OPERATION AND OUR DUTY*

An Appeal to our Countrymen.

Bengal has arrived at a momentous crisis of its history. The hour is come for its chosing between the maintenance of its intellectual and political integrity and the surrender of its reason and leadership to a political chimera. All Bengal is united in its determination to achieve full and complete *Swaraj* as soon as possible ; the speeches at the last session of the Special Congress leave little doubt that all

* Issued shortly after the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta.

the leaders of the political thought of the province are further united in regarding the reformed Legislative Councils as valid and effective instruments for quickening the pace of the nation towards the great goal. In the midst of this unity of purpose and method the monster of a futile but tragic dissension has suddenly raised its head. Some of Bengal's leading representatives have withdrawn their candidature for the Council in obedience to the resolution of the majority at the Special Congress, although they had opposed the passing thereof with all the strength and earnestness they could command. We apprehend that their withdrawal from the elections is founded upon a misunderstanding of the nature and authority of Congress resolutions. Mr. Gandhi, we venture to think, showed a clearer appreciation of the position by stating at the beginning of his memorable speech that in the event of the majority deciding against him, he would regard himself entirely free to go on with his programme against their resolution. The essence of the Congress proceedings has been their elasticity, the majority never wishing or attempting to enforce their decision on the minority on the analogy of a legislative enactment. As Mr. Gandhi observed, the aim of a dissenting minority in a particular session of the Congress should be to convert itself into a majority at the forthcoming one; but this very object would be, more often than not, defeated, if the minority were in the meanwhile to carry out the will of the majority

in the spirit of submission to a law. The question of boycotting the Councils would serve as a useful illustration. A series of majority decisions at the forthcoming sessions of the Congress in favour of its members entering the Councils would serve no practical purpose ; whereas the harm entailed in the procedure we are deprecating would be much intensified if at the session of the Congress immediately preceding the next elections, Mr. Gandhi were to succeed by one of his supreme efforts in registering another majority vote against entry into the Councils. We yield to none in our loyalty to the Congress. We shall always be in it and of it ; it shall ever be to us the inspiration and the symbol of our national determination to be free ; the sacred meeting ground of India's sons and daughters as brothers and sisters ; the holy tabernacle wherein we shall yearly renew our oath of allegiance to the Mother, our vow of self-dedication to her service for the length of our life. But we would earnestly plead with our countrymen not to lead the great institution along the path of futility by treating it as though it were a legislative body which it is not.

We would also appeal to our countrymen not to dismiss the new Government of India Act in a spirit of light-heartedness, but rather would we ask them to appraise this enactment at its real worth by examining into the circumstances of its causation. Surely Great Britain did not declare responsible government to be the goal of British Indian policy

on the 20th August, 1917, in a fit of absentmindedness. The study of her history warrants no such supposition. The hour of that declaration was overdue, and she made it because she realised in a luminous moment of chastened experience that she needs must, or break up her Empire of which India was a vital and organic part. Behind that declaration and the legislation that has followed it, lies the whole history of modern India : all the aspiration and the activity of the founders and followers of the Indian National Congress, all the dreaming and daring, the faith and the hope and the determination, the burning intolerance of unfreedom, the passionate self-sacrifice, summed up in the single phrase "Young India ;" the memory of men who have been through durance and exile with a smile, of those who have passed to their rest from the gallows with "Bande Mataram" on their unquivering lips ; the splendid heroism of India's *Kshatriya* who have died on the fields of England's Empire for the redemption of their country's shame. All this nobility of endeavour has gone to the making of the new Charter, which we should succeed in seeing in its correct perspective, if only we could discipline ourselves to look not merely into our immediate present, but also into our immediate past. Doing so, we should light upon the outstanding message of Aurobindo Ghose that India must accept partial *Swaraj* as a means and step towards complete *Swaraj*. This gifted son of Bengal combined in

himself the vision of the seer with the sanity of the statesman, and was able ten years ago to anticipate and visualise to himself the broad outlines of the events that have since happened, and thus leave corresponding words of guidance for his countrymen. We quote the following from his famous "Political Will and Testament" published in the "Karmo Yogin" on the eve of his departure for Pondicherry. "It is generally supposed that the Nationalist party is committed to the persistent and uncompromising refusal of co-operation until they get the full concession of *Swaraj*. Nationalist publicists have not cared to combat this error explicitly because they were most anxious to get their ideal accepted and the spirit of passive resistance and complete self-help popularized than to discuss a question which was not then a part of practical politics. But it is obvious that a party advancing such a proposition would be a party of doctrinaires and idealists, not of practical thinkers and workers. The Nationalist principle is the principle of 'no control, no co-operation.' Since all control has been refused and so long as all control is refused, the Nationalist party preaches the refusal of co-operation, as complete as we can make it. But it is evident that if, for instance, the power of imposing protective duties were given to a popular and elective body, no serious political party would prefer persistence in commercial boycott to the use of the powers conceded. Or if education were similarly made free of

official control and entrusted to a popular body, as Lord Reay once thought of entrusting it, no sensible politician would ask the nation to boycott that educaion. Or if the courts were manned by Indian judges and made responsible not to the Executive but to a Minister representing the people, arbitration would immediately take its place as a supplementary aid to the regular courts. So also the refusal to co-operate in an administration which excludes the people from an effective voice does not involve a refusal to co-operate in an administration of which the people are an effective part. The refusal of autocratic gifts does not involve a refusal to take up popular rights inalienably secured to the people. It is, on the con'rary, with the object of compelling the concession of the various elements of *Swaraj* by peaceful moral pressure and in the absence of such concessions developing our own institutions to the gradual extrusion and final supplanting of bureaucratic institutions, that the policy of self-help and passive resistance was started. The acceptance of popular rights does not imply the abandonment of the ideal of complete autonomy or of the use of passive resistance in case of any future abritrary interference with the rights of the people. It implies only the use partial *Swaraj* as a step and means towards complete *Swaraj*."

We subscribe to every word of this remarkable pronouncement. The statesman in Aurobindo Ghose made him aware that Indian freedom like the

Empire of Rome could not be built in a day, and would come to his country by way of partial *Swaraj*, which he admonished his countrymen not to forego unless they were content for ever with the role of being mere doctrinaires and idealists. None have a greater right to speak on behalf of the motherland than he, and we are loth to believe that his countrymen will not seriously take to heart and act upon those pregnant words he has left behind him, applying literally, as they do, to the facts of the present situation. The very prescience of which they were born should inspire us to follow them. Had Parliament transferred the control to popular representatives of no more than the department of education, Aurobindo Ghose would have his countrymen cease to non-co-operate to the extent of such control. His call to co-operation becomes therefore of the greater urgency and authority in view of the transference of control to the people's nominees over so many more branches of Government. It is not without reason that men like Pulin Behary Das and others of like faith who have suffered so much for the sake of the love they have borne the motherland have expressed themselves explicitly against the doctrine and practice of non-co-operation. In the highest interests of the motherland, in the light of all the happenings since *Swadeshi*, and in the words of one of India's noblest sons, we would conclude with the earnest appeal to our countrymen to take up the task of partial *Swaraj* in that spirit

of concentration and consecration which alone can lead it into the fruition of complete *Swaraj*, the fixed and unalterable goal of our common aspiration and common endeavour.

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